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■ 'THEY THREATENED OFFICERS WITH KNIVES, TAUNTING THEM TO FIGHT'

Yacht pirates hauled ashore

■ Audacious thieves slash police during daring daylight escape

By **Saran Mitrarat**

A CAT-AND-MOUSE chase through Chalong Bay marina ended with police firing into the air and apprehending two armed yacht thieves last weekend.

The suspects, not willing to surrender, made a brazen escape attempt in Phuket Town in broad daylight the next day that ended with two police officers being attacked with a broken bottle. Both officers suffered deep cuts in apprehending the escapees, with one officer requiring 10 stitches to a cut on his face.

Local yachtsman Capt Bruce Issell was notified by a silent alarm that intruders had boarded the well-known Phuket catamaran *DaVinci* at about 11:30pm last Friday night, prompting him to investigate.

"I was alone on the *DaVinci* Sunseeker 50 towing a dinghy behind and my fellow captain, Phayon 'Nhu' Phumthong, was in another dinghy. When the alarm went off we went to see what was happening and Capt Nhu saw people on the boat..."

Continued on Page 2



Two police officers were injured as the pair of thieves attempted to escape in broad daylight.

Russians working on Soi Bangla behind bars

A NIGHT raid of four clubs in Phuket's nightlife epicenter, Soi Bangla, saw 35 illegally working Russians arrested.

Those arrested face a variety of charges ranging from public indecency to working without a work permit.

Full story on Page 3

Shark fetus on display in Kata

Two scalloped hammer-head shark fetuses were discovered on display at a Kata restaurant, inciting *Gazette* readers to demand something be done.

Full story on Page 8

DSI re-opens investigation of killer cops

Four years after a Buddha image thief was gunned down by police in broad daylight, the Department of Special Investigation begins an inquest into the yet-to-be-explained circumstances surrounding the 32-year-old man's death.

Full story on Page 6

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This Week



Business

Phuket's positioning as Thailand's second major MICE hub. **Page 11**



Business

Frank Gunn shares a shot of wheatgrass at his juice bar. **Page 13**



Diving

Exploring the desert under the sea invites discoveries. **Page 34**



Environment

The Asian openbill stork and golden apple snail on Phuket. **Page 36**



LOS

Ye Olde Curmudgeon solves the world's problems. **Page 42**



Sport

An interview with the winner of the ITF tourney at TSLC. **Page 51**

Saturday



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Sunday



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Monday



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Tuesday



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Wednesday



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Thursday



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Protest by illegal taxis gains airport reprieve

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

DAYS of protests by taxi drivers operating under the Mook Andaman Cooperative has led officials at Phuket International Airport to allow 25 of their drivers to serve passengers at the airport without further delay.

Phuket Land Transport Office Chief Terayout Prasertphol explained, "Mook Andaman will have 25 cars join Phuket Mai Khao Company on the condition that each driver pays a monthly fee of 2,600 baht plus 25 per cent of income earned from fares, and drives either a Toyota Altis or Camry with an engine capacity over 1,600cc."

The point of contention reportedly was that the vehicles used by Mook Andaman drivers did not satisfy the requirements laid down by law for taxi drivers serving the airport.

"If Mook Andaman does not have enough cars that satisfy the legal requirements, we will be flexible and have them present a list of drivers and their vehicles so we can pass that on to Phuket Mai Khao Company for consideration," chief Terayout added.



Mook Andaman drivers confront airport officials over access to passengers.

Also, Mook Andaman Secretary Ittipol Mektanee told reporters that his drivers had been waiting since last August for Airports of Thailand (AOT) to respond to their request to serve the airport.

"We have been denied the right to work by the AOT staff and by the companies who have received concessions at the airport. We want the AOT to clarify what our working rights are," he said.

However, the deal to allow some drivers to serve the airport may be only a temporary reprieve

from further protests.

The 25 names to be provided must already be on the list of 50 drivers who were approved to work at an airport-taxi meeting last November.

Yet, Mook Andaman President Songtham Mekmanee explained that only 25 of the drivers named on the list were from his co-operative. "The others are not our members," he said.

"I will file a complaint about this problem to the AOT to reconsider the names on the list," Mr Songtham added.

Yacht thieves run aground

From page 1

...and Capt Nhu saw people on the boat with a yellow dinghy tied up at the back," Capt Issell said.

"We called the police and I said to him just wait, stay away and watch them," he explained.

On seeing the two boats maneuvering around them, the thieves attacked the Sunseeker and attempted to climb into the dinghy trailing behind the luxury yacht to board and capture Capt Issell.

"They also tried to board the dinghy Capt Nhu was in, threatening him with knives," he said.

Police officers soon arrived in force on board a dinghy offered by a local dive company.

"They also threatened the officers with knives, taunting them to come on board their dinghy to fight," Capt Issell explained.

In response to the threats, police fired two warning shots into the air.

"The bad boys did not have guns," Capt Issell confirmed.

Realizing they had no way to escape and that police were armed, the thieves surrendered and were brought ashore.

Niwat Duangmanee and Theeraphol Malasan, both 21, were charged with using knives to commit armed robbery; using a vehicle to evade police; and receiving stolen property, Sub Lt Kraisor Boonprasop of the Chalong Police confirmed.

"They confessed to all charges except receiving stolen property," he added.



The Da Vinci catamaran is well known for its competitive results in the Phuket Raceweek and King's Cup regattas.

The next day, Niwat and Theeraphol attempted an audacious escape in broad daylight while being transported to Phuket Provincial Court in Phuket Town.

"When the transport pickup truck stopped at the Seng-Ho intersection on Montri Road, they kicked open the cage door and ran off into the nearby Bang Yai Canal," Capt Nucharee Longkaew of the Phuket City Police explained.

Two Chalong Police officers, Sen Sgt Maj Boonpob Kingmala and Sen Sgt Maj Chaloe Thanyapan, gave chase and cornered the escapees in the canal.

"The suspects, still handcuffed together, smashed a bottle they found in the water and attacked the police," Capt Nucharee said.

The officers moved in and bravely arrested the men, but not before Sgt Boonpob suffered a cut that required 10 stitches and Sgt Chaloe was slashed on the arm.

Killer gold robber still on island

PHUKET Police received a tip-off last Friday that the armed robber of a Phuket gold shop who gunned down a customer on April 8 was still on the island.

"We are continuing to gather information from witnesses. I got another phone call this morning [April 26] that confirmed our belief that the robber is still on the run in Phuket," Provincial Police Commander Choti Chavalviwat told the *Gazette*.

The Royal Thai Police, as well as all police stations on Phuket, have been notified of the situation and an arrest warrant has been issued by the court, Gen Choti confirmed.

Gen Choti urged anyone with information that might lead to the arrest of the killer to contact the nearest police station, the Phuket Provincial Police at 076-212046.

He also offered informants to call the Commander himself at 081-8021011.

"We will find the culprit and we will arrest him as soon as possible," he added.

— Namsai Wongsaree

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DSI Deputy Director-General Yanapol Yungyuen says he is considering using Facebook to catch foreigners working illegally. Photo: Saran Mitratat

Facebook to tag illegal foreigners

THE Department of Special Investigation (DSI) is considering launching a Facebook page so that people can report foreigners working illegally in Thailand by uploading photos directly onto the Internet.

The news came after DSI Deputy Director-General Yanapol Yungyuen on April 26 heard a slew of complaints from Phuket business owners at a meeting in Cherng Talay.

"I will open an official email address to receive complaints, and we can also start a Facebook page, which might make it easier for users to upload photos and tag them," Pol Col Yanapol said.

"If anyone sees a foreigner working without a work permit or working in an occupation reserved for Thais, please take a photo of them and send it to us," he urged.

Supachai Wattanaparinton, Vice-President of the Phuket office of the Professional Guide Association (PGA), raised the issue of foreigners using Thai nominees to form Thai companies.

"Foreigners use Thai people to register companies, but only give

them a little money in return. I saw a woman who was the 'owner' of a tourist company riding an old motorbike and living in a tiny rented room," Mr Supachai said to illustrate his point.

"Tourism can generate a great deal of income for Thailand, but in fact, very little of that money from tourism goes to Thais," he said.

Samart Duwao, a taxi driver, brought the DSI's attention to the fact that it is easy for foreigners to operate black plate taxis to and from the airport.

"A foreigner can just rent a car and pick up passengers at the airport. It's too hard for law enforcement agencies to check because they can just claim they are picking up a friend," Mr Samart explained.

Col Yanapol urged all present to adopt a unified approach to resolve the issues, and not rely on the government alone.

"Government officers need the cooperation of every department, as well as residents, in tackling these problems," he said.

— Saran Mitratat

Russians nabbed in 'topless' raids

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

EMPLOYMENT officers arrested 35 Russians in four nightclubs on Monday night following reports of topless dance shows in Phuket's infamous nightlife destination, Soi Bangla in Patong.

Kathu District Chief Veera Kerdirimongkol led the raids on the four clubs at about 10pm.

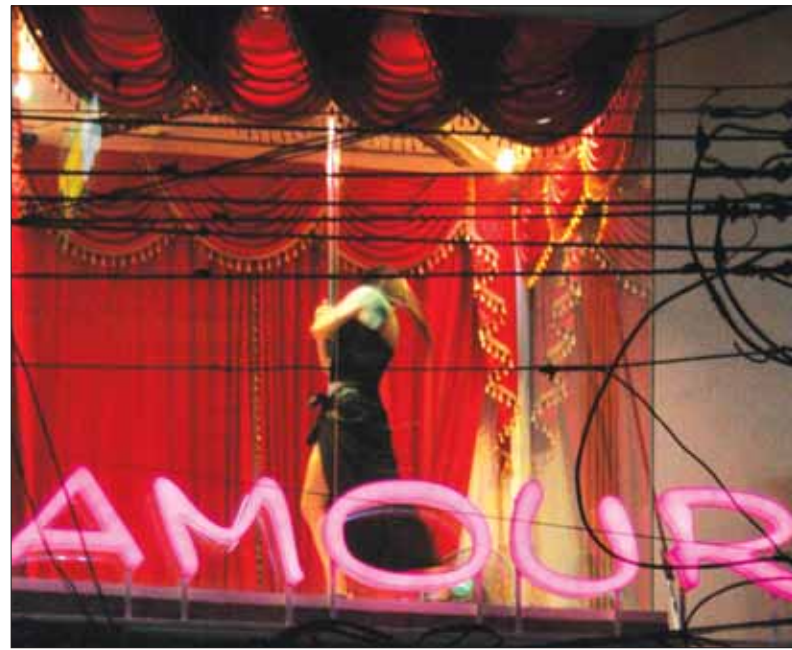
"We received reports of topless shows at nightclubs in the area and suspected there were also illegal workers operating," he said.

Overall 35 Russians – 29 women and six men – were found in violation of labor laws, explained Mr Veera.

Those arrested and brought in by the officers face a variety of charges ranging from public indecency to working without a work permit.

Some of those who did have work permits were working in a different sector than indicated on the permit, Mr Veera said.

The first nightclub hit by the raid was L'Amour, where dancer Elena Shatokhina, 32, was arrested and taken to Kathu District



A dancer twirls on a chrome pole in the street-view window of the L'Amour club on Patong's popular Soi Bangla. Photo: Gazette file

Office for further questioning.

Seduction, Paradise Club and Moulin Rouge nightclubs were subsequently raided.

"We will ensure everyone is dealt with justly. Those who have work permits, but did not have them available, were assisted by

officials in collecting their documents," Mr Veera said.

The Patong Police along with the Phuket Business Development Office and Tourism Business and Guide Registration Office have been contacted to further the investigation.



The raids followed a tip-off of topless shows being held at the venues.



Six men were arrested in the raids.

Tour guides protest 'Chinese Takeaway'

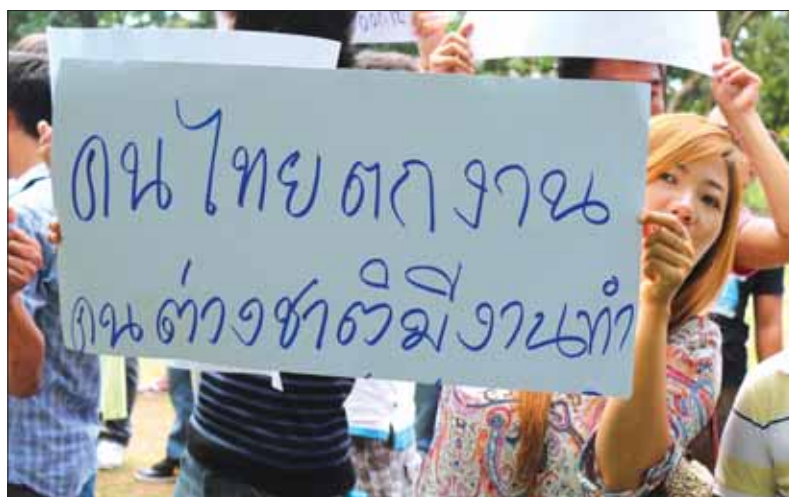
MORE than 200 Thai tour guides massed at Provincial Hall on Monday to protest Chinese nationals working illegally as tour guides.

By law, only Thai nationals certified by the Professional Guide Association (PGA) may be employed as tour guides in Thailand.

"More than 300 Chinese guides are stealing our jobs. Those guides pretend to be tourists and take Chinese tourists on tours to attractions around the island," protest leader Jaifu Sae-lee said.

"Some of them give tourists incorrect information about Phuket and Thailand because their knowledge of the history, the province, the country and the culture is not accurate," he added.

Mr Jaifu also accused illegal Chinese guides of making slanderous remarks. "They create a negative image of Phuket and Thailand by saying things that are bad and untrue about the province and the country. For example, they tell tourists that poor Thai parents are forcing their daughters and



A protester holds up a placard that reads, 'Thais lose jobs. Foreigners get jobs'. Photo: Kritsada Mueanhawong

sons to become prostitutes or join ladyboy shows," he alleged.

Phuket Vice Governor Somkiet Sangkaosuttirak immediately supported the call to raise the number of approved Chinese-speaking guides to more than 80.

"Illegal guides are a problem that needs serious action. I would like the Chinese-speaking local

guides' help in sending me any information they have about the illegal Chinese guides and tour operators who use these guides instead of hiring Thais," V/Gov Somkiet said.

"I will ask the relevant organizations to press charges against them," he warned.

— Kritsada Mueanhawong

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Thai innovation may inspire a Phuket clearwater revival

OFFICERS at the Phuket Office of Natural Resource and Environment (NRE) are promoting a new mini wastewater treatment machine developed in Thailand as a possible savior for Phuket's ongoing water-pollution woes.

The machine, called the Water Revival, was developed by Kanok Nakaew, the Research and Development chief at Kasetsart University's Energy and Environmental Engineering Center in Bangkok.

"This new wastewater-treatment machine is environmentally friendly. It uses a magnetic field to treat water," Mr Kanok said at a demonstration of the machine at the Phuket NRE office last week.

The great advantage of the machine is its small size and its relatively low cost to implement, Mr Kanok said.

"The machine needs about 10 square meters of space, it takes less than an hour to set up, installation and operating costs are low, and it produces clean water and saturated sediments insoluble in water," he said.



Kanok Nakaew, Kasetsart's Energy and Environmental Engineering R&D chief, demonstrates how to use the Water Revival machine.

Environmental specialist Nutthakrit Polpetch said the innovative machine could resolve water-pollution problems at many areas across Phuket, and even off-shore, such as on Racha Yai Island.

Other areas where the machine may prove invaluable included Bang Yai Canal in Phuket Town and the canal at Bang Tao Beach, said Mr Nutthakrit.

"This machine is used at many places across Thailand to success-

fully resolve wastewater problems, so the Phuket Office of Natural Resource and Environment contacted Mr Kanok, who invented the machine, to introduce it, explain how it works and advise where it would best be used for resolving water-pollution issues in Phuket," Mr Nutthakrit explained.

"Now that they know about this machine, business owners and local administrative organizations can decide whether or not to buy one to resolve any wastewater-treatment problems they may have," he added.

A standard version of the innovative machine can treat up to 100 cubic meters of wastewater a day.

"We can place orders for wastewater treatment machines in different sizes, depending on the need.

"The standard model costs about 4 million baht, which is much cheaper than other comparable machines already in use, which cost on average about 10 million baht each," Mr Nuttakrit explained.

- Kritsada Mueanhawong

Reaching

SUICIDE rates have increased 60 per cent worldwide over the past 45 years, according to the World Health Organization. Phuket is not immune, but there is help available for those in need. The Gazette's Leslie Porterfield reports.

KHEMMANIT Jantharaapa was 38 years old when she walked onto Thao Thepkasattri Bridge in tears on April 24. She took off her shoes and placed them next to her bag before jumping over the side.

A frantic rescue effort by locals led to her being fished from the waters. Despite local rescue worker's efforts, Ms Khemmanit was pronounced dead on arrival at Thalang Hospital.

"She was crying and asked me to take her to the bridge to meet her friend. I said I couldn't, as I had other errands to run, so she decided to walk alone," local resident Arun Wanayao said.

"I went back to see her, but I couldn't find her. I went looking for her and rode my motorbike to the area under the bridge - and I saw her jump," he said.

In March an American man in Baan Manik, distraught after an argument with his girlfriend, tried to kill himself by cutting his throat.

He called his girlfriend to tell her what he was doing, and she notified police.

He was taken to the hospital, where he refused the stitches that doctors recommended and asked to be released.

On December 31, a 21-year-old Australian admitted to Patong Hospital with anxiety and depression also refused treatment. He left the hospital and later that day jumped from his ninth-floor hotel room to his death.

The Gazette reported on 17 possible suicide attempts from March 2012 to February 2013. Eleven attempts were successful, or in the mental health parlance, completed.

Six of those who tried to take their lives were westerners - three tourists and three expats - nine were Thai, one was Burmese and one was a Filipina. Only one was a woman.

Worldwide, more men than women commit suicide, according to statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO).

MOTIVES

Love problems were cited as possible motives in nine of the cases reported by the Gazette; one was pinned to financial problems; in three cases the individuals involved were described as mentally unstable; and in four cases the motives were unclear from reports.

Bruce Stanley, the American warden who has been helping

visitors and expats in Phuket for over 20 years, believes destitution is often the cause of expat suicides in Phuket.

"People run out of money and can't go home," Mr Stanley told the Gazette.

"A few years ago, one man told me he couldn't go home because he was wanted for something. Another fellow didn't have any family. You get a lot of people who don't have a safety net," he said.

SUICIDE RATES

The Phuket Public Health Chief, Dr Bancha Kankong, says the suicide rate in Phuket - 6.1 per 100,000 people - is not critical. Lamphun has the highest rate, according to the Thai Department of Mental Health's website, at 15.58 per 100,000.

The WHO figure for Thailand as a whole was 7.8 per 100,000 in 2002.

In contrast, the US rate was 11 per 100,000 in 2005, in the UK it was 6.9 (2009), in Australia, 8.2. Russia and S. Korea have two of the highest rates in the world, at 30 for Russia (2006) and 31 for South Korea (2009).

It should be kept in mind that the WHO says the "reliability of suicide certification and reporting is in great need of improvement."

GETTING HELP

"People don't know there's help for them," Mr Stanley explained to the Gazette.

"Consuls will all help people. One of the ways they can help is by contacting next of kin. The family often will fly over here if they have the resources," he said.

As for medical treatment on Phuket, Mr Stanley said that it's difficult to get prescriptions for psychotic and bipolar disorders in Thailand.

"In America we have drugs like Prozac, but here it's a lot more challenging to get them, so if people are psychotic or bipolar, they can't just go in to the doctor and get them - they have to go through a process. And when you're psychologically stressed, you don't have the patience to go through all that.

"Hospitals [in Phuket] are often not helpful. There was a suicidal fellow a couple of years ago who got checked into a hospital under observation, and they put him on the top floor of the hospital in a room with a balcony and as soon as the nurse left

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out for that helping hand

It can be scary when a friend or loved one is thinking about suicide. To be helpful, try to:

- Be direct. Talk openly and matter-of-factly about suicide.
- Be willing to listen. Allow expressions of feelings. Accept the feelings.
- Be non-judgmental. Don't debate whether suicide is right or wrong, or whether feelings are good or bad. Don't lecture on the value of life.
- Get involved. Become available. Show interest and support.
- Don't dare him or her to do it.
- Don't act shocked. This will put distance between you.
- Don't be sworn to secrecy. Seek support.
- Offer hope that alternatives are available, but do not offer glib reassurance.
- Take action. Remove means, such as guns or stockpiled pills.
- Get help from persons or agencies specializing in crisis intervention and suicide prevention.

Source: American National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

the room he jumped off the balcony," he said.

Mr Stanley explained that he now sends people to the International Office at Vachira Hospital.

"There's a woman there named Methevee Maneesri. She can get all kinds of services for people who are suicidal, and for virtually no fee," Mr Stanley said.

There's a psychiatric hospital in Surat Thani [Suan Saranrom Hospital] where they send people who are suicidal, and they're given free treatment," he added.

Officials at the Phuket Public Health Office also recommended contacting Vachira Hospital.

"People in need can also call the tourist police," Claude de Crissey, a tourist police volunteer said.

Mr de Crissey strongly recommended coming to Thailand with insurance because medical expenses can quickly pile up, causing serious financial issues,

which can exacerbate other issues they are facing.

"I think the Thai government should require it," he said. "It's so important. If a visitor doesn't have it, they could be asked to sign a contract on arrival."

If people have psychological problems and don't have insurance to pay for treatment, their condition can become dangerous, he said.

Martin Carpenter, the UK Honorary Consul, agreed but strongly suggested having a Phuket branch of Samaritans – an organization of volunteers available to discuss and help callers with any issue, not just suicide.

The Bangkok office of Samaritans confirmed that they offer both telephone and email services in Thai, English and occasionally in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Additional reporting by Saran Mitrarat

Who Can Help?

Tourist Police

Tel: 1155

Phuket Tourist Police Volunteers

www.phuket-tourist-police-volunteers.com

Tel: 1155

Vachira Phuket Hospital

Tel: 076-361222

Hours: 8:30am - 8pm; Weekends 8:30am - 4:30pm

Bangkok Hospital Phuket

Tel: 1719 (asked to be transferred to the Mental Health Center)

English spoken, interpreters can be reached for other languages

Hours: 8am to 5pm

After hours: Go to the emergency room

<http://www.phukethospital.com/Health-Centre/Mental-Health-Center.php#Treatments>

Honorary Consuls

Check your local embassy or the Gazette Guide for numbers

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org

Bangkok hotline: Thai 02-7136793 (noon to 10pm). English speakers must leave a message at 02-7136791 and will be called back within 24 hours.

Email: samaritans_thai@hotmail.com

(all emails will be responded to within 24 hours)

General information

When to ask for help, how to help someone else:

<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/Someone>

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THE US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) is the largest scientific organization in the world dedicated to research focused on the understanding, treatment and prevention of mental disorders. According to the NIMH:

Who Is At Risk?

- An estimated 11 nonfatal suicide attempts occur per every suicide death. Men and the elderly are more likely to have fatal attempts than are women and youth.
- Risk factors for nonfatal suicide attempts by adults include depression and other mental disorders, alcohol and other substance abuse and separation or divorce.
- Risk factors for attempted suicide by youth include depression, alcohol or other drug-use disorder, physical or sexual abuse and disruptive behavior.
- Most suicide attempts are expressions of extreme distress, not harmless bids for attention. A person who appears suicidal should not be left alone and needs immediate mental-health treatment.

Chronic sticky fingers leads to more snatching



Serial snatcher gets fingered.

THALANG and Phuket City Police have arrested a bag snatcher who reportedly committed 20 snatch thefts within two weeks, including three on April 24 in the hours before his arrest.

"We arrested Boonserm Chaluaysri, 22, yesterday [April 24] after we received a report from Phuket City Police of a bag snatch in Rassada in the morning," Thalang Police case investigator Chatree Chuwichian said.

"Phuket City Police were in pursuit of the thief and called for assistance as the thief had entered our jurisdiction," he added.

While Thalang Police were setting up checkpoints to snare the man, they received a report of another bag snatch in their area – from a lady in front of Tha Rua temple.

About 20 minutes later, Thalang Police received a report of yet another bag snatch, this time from a lady in front of a supermarket in Baan Yamu.

Officers at a checkpoint near the Bang Pae Waterfall in Pa Khlok spotted a man matching the description of the thief, but the man noticed the officers' reaction to his approach and sped off.

"We chased after him and finally found his motorbike dumped in a rubber plantation. We quickly searched the plantation and found him about 15 minutes later," Capt Chatree said.

Mr Boonserm reportedly confessed to committing 20 snatch thefts in Phuket's Muang and Thalang Districts in the past two weeks.

He was taken to Thalang Police Station for further questioning and was charged for his spate of snatch thefts, Capt Chatree confirmed.

– **Thawit Bilabdullar**

DSI re-opens probe into cops gunning down Buddha thief

By Kritsada Mueanhawong

OFFICERS from the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) on April 25 returned to the scene of the fatal shooting by police of a Buddha image thief on the run in Phuket Town in 2009.

Thaweewat Surasit, regional director of the DSI's Bureau of Special Crime, led a team of officers to Rama IX Park, also known as Suan Luang, on Chao Fa Road to retrace the last steps of the slain man, Ongard Rordpradit, 32.

Mr Ongard was shot dead by police after he resisted arrest by allegedly opening fire on police officers in pursuit of him. He was fleeing the officers after he tried to sell a Buddha image that was reportedly stolen in an armed robbery hours earlier.

"We have come to inspect the area and collect all information about the case before we proceed with our investigation," Mr Thaweewat said.

Mr Ongard's father and relatives filed a complaint to the DSI immediately after the shooting four years ago.

"They do not believe Mr Ongard fought police as they tried to arrest him," Mr Thaweewat said.

Recounting the events that led to Mr Ongard's death, Mr Thaweewat



Wichit Rordpradit shows DSI officers photos of his slain son.

explained that on November 23, 2009, police responded to a call from a store near Suan Luang.

The store owner reported that two men had tried to sell a Buddha image that matched the description of one stolen earlier that day.

Police arrived at the scene and arrested the second man, but Mr Ongard fled into the park, Mr Thaweewat explained.

The officers in pursuit reported

that Mr Ongard opened fire on them, Col Siang Kaewthong of the Phuket Provincial Police said.

"The officers opened fire and shot Mr Ongard dead at the scene," Mr Thaweewat said.

According to police photos taken at the scene in 2009, Mr Ongard was found in possession of a revolver and at least five bullets.

"There are many things that were odd about my son's death,"

Mr Ongard's father, Wichit Rordpradit, told the *Gazette*.

"The gun was apparently found in the palm of my son's hand and he was found lying face up. My son was not clutching the gun, so for him to have been shot and fallen to land face up, the gun should have fallen somewhere. It should not have still been in his hand.

"Also, the bullets police say they found do not match the gun they say they found. The bullets could not have been fired from that gun," Mr Wichit said.

There were also some other oddities that prompted the family to file a complaint to the DSI. When collecting Mr Ongard's body, his mother and sister noted that he was not wearing a shirt, revealing that his body was covered in bruises.

"Police told Mr Ongard's mother that the shirt was being held as evidence," Mr Thaweewat said.

"Now police cannot provide the shirt to hand over to the DSI," Mr Wichit added.

The DSI finally agreed to investigate the case after the court last year ruled that it was unsatisfied with the evidence provided by police in justifying the killing of the suspect.

"There is something odd about this case," Mr Thaweewat said.

Boobs or bust: Aussie business raffles off holiday

A COSMETIC surgery holiday company in Australia is now raffling off a trip to Phuket, complete with the option of breast augmentation surgery – all for the price of a round of drinks.

The company, ID Rejuvenation, has paired up with the popular local nightclub Tryst, in Mackay on the Central Queensland coast, to offer the deal, reported the local newspaper *CQNews*.

Amy Price, head of ID client services, explained that willing punters need to simply spend AUS\$50 on drinks at Tryst.

Cosmetic surgery is popular in the coastal town, but is out of most residents' budgets, she explained.

"I know probably 10 girls that have just got breast implants this

month," Ms Price told the *Daily Mercury*.

Ms Price said the competition, launched last weekend, had already generated much interest from male and female patrons.

While most people inquired about breast augmentation, many also asked about dental work, laser corrective eye surgery and other cosmetic procedures such as nose jobs, liposuction and eyelifts, she said.

Phuket ranked high on the company's medical tourism list of destinations.

"We had a testimonial by one girl who had the surgery one day and spent the next day drinking cocktails by the pool," Ms Price said.

The competition prize pays for



An Aussie business is giving away a free cosmetic surgery and Phuket holiday for the price of a round of drinks – AUS\$50. Photo: ID Rejuvenation

flights, five nights' accommodation and surgery.

Patrons compile their dollar-value of drinks on a punch card, which is then entered in a lucky

draw. They can enter as many times as they like.

The winner will be drawn at the end of July.

– **Phuket Gazette**

Lucky man takes leak, dodges juggernaut

A PHUKET Town security guard heading home from work late last night had a lucky escape from becoming another Phuket road statistic after an 18-wheeled truck and trailer obliterated his motorbike with sidecar on Thepkrasattri Road.

The truck driver did not stop at the scene.

Kitti Muongthong, 35, pulled over near the u-turn about 200 meters north of the Tah Reua Temple at about 11:45pm to answer the call of nature.

"I was heading home to Thalang after work and I pulled my *saleng* [motorbike with sidecar] over by



The remains of Mr Kitti's sidecar.

ing a complaint to the police.

"I will pay for the damage to my motorbike myself," Mr Kitti explained.

– **Thawit Bilabdullar**

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Songkran not wet enough for smoker who torched bike



Water everywhere, except where he needed it. Photo: Gazette Files

A MAN who was drunkenly celebrating Songkran on April 13 was picked up by police on April 26 after being tracked down through CCTV images that showed him setting a motorbike on fire with a cigarette butt.

Panuphon Prutisarn, 36, confessed to Kathu Police that he torched the bike, but claimed it was unintentional.

"It was Songkran Day and I was drunk," Mr Panuphon told police.

"I smoked a cigarette, and when I threw away the butt it hit the bike. I didn't do it on purpose," he said.

"The CCTV footage shows Mr Panuphon stopping his bike to smoke a cigarette," explained Lt Col Somsak Tongkliang.

"Then he flicks away the cigarette butt and it lands on a nearby motorbike. In the film we can see a small flame start as Mr Panuphon rides away," he said.

"The bike that burned was an old one and there was probably oil on it. It was also a very windy day – both factors would have helped the flame spread," Col Somsak explained.

Mr Panuphon has been charged with recklessly causing damage to property.

"I am willing to take full responsibility for my action," he said.

This is the second fire from a cigarette butt caught on CCTV this month.

"If a cigarette butt causes damage, there is a high penalty, even if it is not intentional," he said.

– Namsai Wongsaree

Hammerhead a la carte

Protected shark found on ice at Kata restaurant and market

By Irfan Jamdukor

LOCAL concern peaked in Phuket after photos began to circulate of two baby scalloped hammerhead sharks on display in front of a restaurant in Kata last week.

"The ones [scalloped hammerhead sharks] at that restaurant clearly show to everybody that they are fetuses – they are not fully grown sharks, so obviously fishermen caught a female shark somewhere, chopped her open and that's what was inside," said Tony Andrews, Thailand's West coast PADI Regional Manager and Project AWARE Ambassador, who was notified of the fetal sharks on display by a local diver.

"If you look at the back dorsal fin, it's not developed yet. If you look at it closely, it actually looks like it has feathers instead of a fully developed fin," Mr Andrews added.

At this year's Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Conference in Bangkok, protection was increased for five commercially-exploited species of sharks and manta rays, one of which was the scalloped hammerhead shark.

"The 16th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES will be remembered as a historic moment in shark and ray conservation," said Bryan Arroyo, head of the US delegation to the CITES meeting.

However, the species was added to the CITES Appendix II – an action that means increased protection, but still allows legal and sustainable trade.

Within Thailand scalloped hammerhead sharks are protected, explained Ukkrit Satapoomin, Director of Phuket Marine Biological Center of Andaman.

"According to the announcement from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment notification in Phuket BE 2553,



Hammerhead shark fetuses on display in a seafood restaurant in Kata. Though it is illegal to fish for or possess the shark, it may be bought and sold as food. Photo: Ricky Zen

scalloped hammerhead sharks are on the list of 'beautiful' protected fish species.

It clearly states that fishing for or possessing any fish on the list is illegal," Dr Ukkrit explained.

The possession of any scalloped hammerhead sharks or other members of the Sphyrnidae family for research, breeding and aquaculture, as well as selling the living animal must be approved by the governor or the Phuket Fisheries Department, Dr Ukkrit said.

"The penalty for breaking the law is up to one year of prison

time and a fine of up to 100,000 baht," he added.

"However, there is no penalty for buying or selling this species for food," he explained.

Whale sharks are the only species of shark protected by the Wildlife Preservation and Protection Act BE 2535, which makes it illegal to hunt, keep in captivity or eat them, Dr Ukkrit said.

In response to concerned citizens who noticed baby scalloped hammerhead sharks also on display several months ago, Narin Meewong, an officer of the

Phuket Fisheries Department, led a team down to the popular tourist area to investigate.

"We went to check the market area in Kata about three months ago and found that shark was being sold as a food item.

"Specifically, we found scalloped hammerhead sharks that were accidentally caught in the fishermen's nets," he told the *Gazette*.

"We are trying to preserve the number of sharks in our oceans by advising fishermen to free the sharks if they find them caught in their nets," Mr Narin added.

Villagers expecting good luck from 'elepig'

RESIDENTS of a village in Nakhon Sri Thammarat are queuing up to visit a household where a pig has just given birth to an unusual piglet.

The mother of the "elepig" gave birth to 15 piglets on March 27.

Of the newborns, 14 were normal. One, a white female, was not.

It had a "trunk" about three-inches long coming from its snout and large ears like an elephant. It also had a long tongue, which protruded about one inch from its mouth.

The elepig's unusual features mean it finds it hard to drink milk from its mother's teats, so a human has to help it by dripping the milk into its mouth.

In customary fashion, villagers



want to see the odd pig in order to use it to divine lottery numbers.

The sow's owner, Chira Setthakan, said the pig had never produced a piglet like this before.

She said the family would do its best to keep the elepig alive for as long as possible. But if it dies, she will preserve its corpse – because she believes the creature was born to bring the family luck.

– Sanook



A little piggy like this one, born with a trunk and big ears, has got the neighbors coming by for lottery inspiration. Photo: Piinoezii kzimo.com

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PM Yingluck lashes out at agencies for abuse of power

PRIME Minister Yingluck Shinawatra on Monday heated up the ongoing confrontation between the government – backed by its MPs and supporters – and the Constitutional Court. In an unprecedented action, she assailed independent agencies, accusing them of abusing their power, *The Nation* reported.

The PM has never publicly made such strong remarks against coup leaders or inde-

pendent agencies.

Ms Yingluck said Thailand headed downwards after her brother, ex-PM Thaksin Shinawatra, was overthrown in a military coup in September 2006.

"Thailand lost track and the people spent almost a decade regaining their democratic freedom," she said in her speech at the 7th Ministerial Conference of the Community of

Democracies in Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

She pointed her finger at independent agencies. "The so-called independent agencies have abused the power that should belong to the people, for the benefit of the few rather than for Thai society at large," she said.

Opposition leader Abhisit Vejjajiva replied, "She [Yingluck] should clearly distinguish her roles as a sister and the prime minister.



National Security Council Secretary General Paradorn Pattanabutra. Photo: The Nation

GT200 fraud exposed

AROUND THE nation

A BRITISH court has convicted a businessman who sold fake bomb detectors to governments and security forces around the world – including Thailand – of fraud.

But many of the Thai organizations that were duped, including the Royal Thai Police, Navy and Air Force, are failing to press charges against the companies involved, despite spending millions of dollars on the GT200 devices.

A source from the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) told *The Nation* that all three agencies had purchased GT200s, but declined to come forward to file complaints that they had been cheated.

The source said the DSI has so far been unable to tell how many GT200 and Alpha 6 devices had been purchased by the three agencies, nor could they determine the cost of damages.

The firm responsible for the fraud, Comstrac Co Ltd, used fake certificates from the British and Dutch defense ministries to aid in the deception.

Comstrac owner James McCormick, 56, was convicted of fraud at London's Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey) on April 23.

Mr McCormick is believed to have made about 2.3 billion baht from selling the devices to coun-



The GT200s (pictured) were purchased for about 580 baht and resold for over 500,000 baht. Photo: The Nation

tries including Iraq and Georgia, the *BBC* reported.

The devices were modelled on novelty golf-ball detectors that Mr McCormick purchased for about 580 baht each. They were sold to Thai organizations for around about 500,000 to 1 million baht apiece.

At the time of writing Mr McCormick had yet to be sentenced.

Meanwhile, the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC)

suspects that Thai officials in charge of procuring the bomb detectors allowed irregularities during the bidding process and then more irregularities when the quality of the products was to be checked.

The DSI source said the purchasing panels checked the devices under the guidance of the suppliers. The DSI's ongoing investigation found that when the manufacturer of the GT200 and Alpha 6 devices was about to

make delivery, it prepared its own explosive-ordnance disposal team for the quality checks.

The Royal Thai Army also purchased the devices. Army chief General Prayuth Chan-ocha said reporters should stop attacking the Army over the GT200 procurements.

"Don't say there was foul play because the purchases were done several years ago. Please provide evidence to back your allegations," Gen Prayuth said.

Thailand reject BRN demands

THAI authorities have rejected demands by the separatist Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) in the second round of ongoing peace talks in Malaysia.

BRN leaders made five demands in a video that was released on YouTube on April 28, demanding that:

- Malaysia's role be upgraded to mediator in the ongoing peace dialogue, from merely facilitator as is currently the case
- Only BRN-represented members take part in the process
- Members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation or NGOs observe the next round of meetings
- All suspects detained for terror attacks be released and all warrants revoked
- The BRN be recognized wholly as a liberator, not a separatist organization

The Thai authorities asked the BRN leaders taking part in the talk to make sure that their group's insurgency agents would end their violent attacks in the southern border region.

Violence has continued in the three violence-stricken Deep South provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat since peace talks were announced in February. It is not clear which insurgent groups are responsible for the ongoing attacks, though several are believed to be active in the region.

Both sides agreed to meet again on June 13, National Security Council secretary general Lt Gen Paradorn Pattanabutra said.

Iranian 'terrorist' pleads innocence

AN IRANIAN man who blew off his own legs in an alleged botched bomb plot in Bangkok has told a court that he found the explosives in the house he was renting and knew nothing of any impending attack.

Saeid Moradi, 29, told a Bangkok court last week that he found four bombs hidden inside radios in a cupboard in the house he was staying in, *Sky News* reported.

He claims he ran out onto the street with the explosives, intending to throw them into a canal.

But prosecutors say that when police tried to apprehend him, he attempted to throw one of the bombs in their direction. Instead, he accidentally dropped it and blew off his own legs.

They say he also tried to



Saeid Moradi, 29, claims that he had no prior knowledge of the bomb and was trying to dispose of it when he blew his legs off. Photo: The Nation

throw a bomb at a taxi.

A second Iranian defendant, Mohammad Kharzei, is accused in the same plot and denies any wrongdoing.

Thai authorities believe the men had plotted to blow up Israeli diplomats in Bangkok. Israel claims the men were part of a state-backed terror network.

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In brief...

Italian police shot as new government sworn into office

THE shooting outside the Italian prime minister's office in Rome as a new government was being sworn in on Sunday appeared to be an isolated incident, newly installed Interior Minister Angelino Alfano said.

An unemployed man in his 40s was arrested following the shooting in which two police officers and a passerby were injured.

Mr Alfano said there was no cause for concern about the overall security situation in Italy but added that protective measures had been stepped up at potential targets.

Five rescued, two missing in balloon crash off Peru

FIVE people were rescued and two were missing on Sunday after a hot air balloon plunged into the chilly waters off the coast of Peru, officials said.

A police helicopter and navy boats helped pull five women out of the Pacific Ocean after searching for them for eight hours. They were taken to a hospital for treatment.

Two men were still missing, Interior Minister Wilfredo Pedraza told local media.

Jews revive annual pilgrimage to oldest synagogue in Africa

AFRICA'S oldest synagogue is playing host to a rarity in the Arab world – a religious gathering of hundreds of Jews drawn from Europe and Israel.

Guarded by armed Tunisian police, Jewish revellers chant and dance in a three-day pilgrimage to the El Ghriba synagogue at an island resort 500 km south of Tunis.

"Jews in the world will see the government's efforts to make the celebration safe and will return in their thousands over the next few years and will not pay attention to any threat," Perez Trabelsi, the head of the Jewish community in Djerba, told Reuters.

Millions in CIA 'ghost money' paid to Afghan president's office

TENS of millions of US dollars in cash were delivered by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in suitcases, backpacks and plastic shopping bags to the office of Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai for more than a decade, according to the *New York Times*, citing current and former advisers to the Afghan leader.

The so-called "ghost money" was meant to buy influence for the CIA but instead fuelled corruption and empowered warlords, undermining Washington's exit strategy from Afghanistan, the newspaper quoted US officials as saying.

"The biggest source of corruption in Afghanistan," one American official said, "was the United States."

For more than a decade the cash was dropped off every month or so at the Afghan

president's office, the newspaper said.

US and Afghan officials familiar with the payments were quoted as saying that the main goal in providing the cash was to maintain access to Mr Karzai and his inner circle and to guarantee the CIA's influence at the presidential palace, which wields tremendous power in Afghanistan's highly centralized government.

Much of the money went to warlords and politicians, many with ties to the drug trade and in some cases the Taliban, the *New York Times* said. US and Afghan officials were quoted as saying the CIA supported the same patronage networks that US diplomats and law enforcement agents struggled to dismantle, leaving the government in the grip of organized crime.

– Reuters



The money fuelled many of the organizations the US Government was attempting to dismantle. Photo: Reuters

Little hope of more survivors as Bangladesh toll nears 400

By Ruma Paul and Serajul Quadir

RESCUE officials in Bangladesh said on Monday they were unlikely to find more survivors in the rubble of a factory building that collapsed last week, burying hundreds of garment workers in the country's worst industrial accident.

Heavy cranes were being used to lift huge concrete blocks from the wreckage of Rana Plaza, where 381 people are now confirmed to have been killed according to the latest official toll. The building housed factories making clothes for Western brands.

Hundreds more of the mostly female workers who are thought to have been inside the building when it caved in on April 24 remain unaccounted for. A fire overnight further hampered the last desperate efforts to find survivors.

"We are giving the highest priority to saving people, but there is little hope of finding anyone alive," army spokesman Shahinul Islam told reporters at the site.

As anger continued to mount over the disaster, the owner of the building was arrested by police commandos on Sunday. Police said he had been trying to flee to India.

About 2,500 people have been rescued from the wrecked building in the commercial suburb of Savar.



Mourners show pictures of workers believed to be trapped in the rubble of the building. Photo: Reuters

Officials said the eight-storey complex had been built on swampy ground without the correct permits, and more than 3,000 workers – most of them young women – entered the building on Wednesday morning despite warnings that it was structurally unsafe.

A bank and shops in the same building closed after a jolt was felt and cracks were noticed on some pillars on Tuesday.

Seven people have been arrested over the disaster, four

factory bosses, two engineers and building owner Mohammed Sohel Rana. Police are looking for a fifth factory boss, who they said was a Spanish citizen.

Rana, a local leader of the ruling Awami League's youth front, was shown on television being brought to Dhaka in handcuffs after he was seized in the border town of Benapole by the elite Rapid Action Battalion following a four-day manhunt.

The collapse was the third

major industrial incident in five months in Bangladesh, the second-largest exporter of garments in the world behind China.

Such incidents have raised serious questions about worker safety and low wages, and could taint the reputation of the country, which relies on garments for 80 per cent of its exports. The industry employs about 3.6 million people, most of them women, some of whom earn as little as \$38 US a month.

– Reuters

Good life goes on as Syrian elite sit out war

IT MIGHT sound absurd to talk about normal life in Syria after two years of civil war which have killed more than 70,000 people and left five million more destitute and homeless.

Yet in the neighborhood of Malki, a tree-lined enclave of central Damascus, a wealthy group of elite, pro-government Syrians still enjoy shopping for imported French cheeses, gourmet hand-made chocolates and iPad minis in the well-stocked, recently built Grand Mall and in nearby boutiques.

Such are the parallel realities of a conflict in which, for all the gains made by rebels and the current chatter about US "red lines" crossed that might ultimately draw in Western might, President Bashar al-Assad is holding his ground in the capital, bulwarked by his own foreign allies and by

Syrians who fear his end could prove fatal for them too. And so life goes on.

Malki residents continue to enjoy material comforts and abundant supplies of imported goods, even as millions of their compatriots subsist on food handouts.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) estimates it is feeding 2.5 million people inside Syria, offering them subsistence rations of flour and rice.

– Reuters



Shopping in Syria. Photo: Reuters



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B26mn bid for lucky plates



LUCKY 7: The Phuket 'Lucky License Plate' auction has generated a total of 147 million baht in eight auctions held since 2003. The most expensive number is 9999. Photos: K Mueanhawong

A LITTLE more than 26 million baht (26,013,000) was earned at the 8th annual "Lucky License Plate Action" held on April 27 and 28 at the Phuket Merlin Hotel in Phuket Town.

This was five million baht short of the initial expectation of 31 million baht, and four million baht less than last year's auction which raised 30 million baht.

This year, a total of 301 "Gor Por" series (the first two Thai characters) license plate numbers were auctioned off to an eager group of elite yet superstitious bidders, including at least three automobile accident victims.

The method of auction was what is known in Thai as "Ja Ja", in which final bids are confirmed with the strike of a gavel.

The first plate number put up for auction was 8899, which got 205,000 baht.

In Thai-Chinese belief, the number 8 represents infinity, while the number 9 symbolizes progress, since the word for the number 9, in Thai, *gao*, also means 'step up' or 'step forward'.

Therefore, it was of little surprise that the highest final bid was made for the plate number 9999, which was auctioned for 1.45 million baht.

This was followed by 7777 (900,000 baht), 8888 (800,000 baht), a single digit, 1 (500,000 baht)

and a single digit, 9 (500,000 baht).

Presided over by Major General Prin Suwanthat, the Deputy Minister of Transport, other VIP guests taking part were Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) chief Teerayut Prasertpol, Somchai Siriwatanachok, director-general of the Department Land Transport (DLT) and Phuket Vice Governor Sommai Prijasilpa.

Maj Gen Prin Suwanthat said that the LTD held its first license plate auction in 2003, at the Grand Hyatt Erawan Hotel in Bangkok, for the Thai series of "Sor Ngor", which generated a total of 45,222,000 baht.

Outside of Bangkok, the first auction was held in Phuket in 2004, for the "Kor Jor" series. That auction generated just over 8 million baht.

Although seeming like a small amount, Maj Gen Prin assured that it was not less than any other province of that time.

Since then, Phuket has held a lucky license plate auction nearly every year, with the total amount of funds raised in all eight auctions just over 147 million baht, he said.

Maj Gen Prin went on to explain that the DLO puts the proceedings into a fund used to promote and support road and automobile safety campaigns. These include accident reduction

campaigns launched during Thai New Year (the Songkran festival) and (western) New Year periods.

The Deputy Minister added that the campaigns will focus on raising road and automobile safety awareness and understanding, specifically among youth – from young children to teenagers.

He said that the fund is also utilized to acquire and implement new technologies, such as traffic cameras and lights, to help regulate and facilitate increased traffic safety.

Moreover, the fund will also be applied towards assisting injured and handicapped automobile accident victims to procure wheel-chairs and prosthetic limbs, he concluded.

– *Phuket Gazette*



BIG BIDDERS: Sales were finalized with the striking of a gavel.

Goods flow better in APEC

AN INTERIM assessment reveals that APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation) member economies are on track to meet their target of a 10% improvement in the region's supply chain performance by 2015, in terms of reducing time, cost and uncertainty.

A recent meeting of APEC trade experts in Surabaya, Indonesia, identified ways to further strengthen supply chain performance, based on a closer examination of this progress, was the focus of

"Many goods, particularly manufactured goods, cross borders multiple times during the production process," said John Larkin, Chair of the APEC Committee on Trade and Investment.

"Ensuring that supply chains operate smoothly, efficiently and at a low cost can help to lift businesses and deliver a wider range of products to consumers at lower prices."

The APEC Supply Chain Connectivity Framework Action Plan, launched by member economies in 2010, focuses on eight key choke points.

Examples include a lack of transparency and awareness among government agencies on

policies affecting the logistics sector, and inadequate transport networks and infrastructure.

The interim assessment evaluated the work taken by APEC economies toward addressing these concerns and the measurable effects on improving the processes in the supply chain.

It revealed that they have completed 77% of the actions listed in their plan for improving supply connectivity.

"These results reflect promising progress in terms of project completion and implementation, and, more importantly, suggest that we are moving closer to achieving our supply chain improvement target," Larkin noted.

The time needed to move goods in the region has dropped 7% over the last three years, the interim assessment indicates.

There has also been an increase in the performance of shipment quality and physical inspection.

"The reductions that we have seen in the region's trade times and supply chain uncertainty should ultimately translate into significant cost savings for businesses and consumers," said Dr Denis Hew, Director of the APEC Policy Sup-

port Unit which administered the interim assessment.

"Supply chain disruptions due to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods appear to have contributed to a temporary increase in costs for importers and exporters."

"These findings underscore the potential real world impact of pursuing further actions to mitigate such disturbances," he explained.

The idea of APEC was first publicly broached by former Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Hawke, during a speech in Seoul, Korea in January 1989.

Later that year, 12 Asia-Pacific economies met in Canberra, Australia to establish APEC. The founding members were: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.

China, Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei joined in 1991. Mexico and Papua New Guinea followed in 1993. Chile acceded in 1994. And in 1998, Peru, Russia and Vietnam joined, taking the full membership to 21.

– *APEC CTI*

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A glass of wheatgrass if you please

VITALITY, curative, nutrient-rich, detoxifying, energy – these are some of the most common connotations associated with the plant, *Triticum aestivum*, more commonly known as ‘wheatgrass’.

Another increasingly common association is cancer prevention.

“That’s what I like about it. Maybe it’s to do with my age,” says 68 year-old Frank Gunn, an American expat who has lived in Phuket for the last 22 years.

Frank’s Thai wife, Lumpoon, passed away from cancer less than two years ago. She was only 45 years old. It is in loving memory of her that Frank has named his gem of a coffee shop on the South of the island “Lumpoon’s Second Cup Free”.

“Wheatgrass is most ideal for [people] 40 years and older. Before that, a healthy body can generally fight off most things,” Frank explains.

Here on Phuket, the herb is mostly associated with detoxification and rehabilitation programs, and isn’t the first thing you might think of when seeking a ‘casual conversation’.

That is, up until now.

Frank drinks about three to four shots of wheatgrass weekly, which he believes is the optimal amount for himself.

Although, he does get regular daily wheatgrass customers. “That’s [taking daily shots] for those who’re really concerned about cancer and health.”

It may take some getting used to for first-timers, but the naturally sweet taste grows on you quickly.

As I knock back a complimen-

Home-grown

By Steven Layne

tary shot with Frank, that sweetness he was talking about is realized: a unique yet familiar grassy sweetness mingling with the tip of my taste buds, before upturning the shot glass, emptying the glass of pure energy down to my tract.

Home-grown right here on the island, the wheatgrass was propagated at Frank’s hillside home near Nai Harn. Frank went on to reveal that an important factor in ensuring healthy maturation of his wheatgrass, is the hillside sea breeze he gets, which he says effectively eliminates any threat of mold.

From seed to grass, the wheatgrass is good for two wholesome cuttings. Each tray can supply about two shots of pure green protein and Frank has four to six

matured trays on hand at any given time.

His knowledge about this ultimate health supplement goes back decades.

As a Santana electric guitar solo climaxes in the background, Frank recalls his life in Northern California prior to 1993.

Originally from New York, and having lived and worked for a period in the salmon industry of Alaska, Frank went on to open and run a second-hand business for eight years in Santa Rosa, California.

He first came to holiday at Phuket in 1991, before finally moving to the island permanently with his wife Lumpoon, in 1993.

As the highlight of his new Phuket chapter, Frank opened an

even more successful second hand business, the first of its kind on the island.

“A little bit of wheatgrass and Santana can go a long way,” he says, as he dims the sound.

“In my town in California, there was a Juice Shack,” he recalls life in the Santa Rosa, just north of San Francisco and Oakland in the 1970s and 1980s.

“But if you look on Google now, there are about twenty of them in that area.

“On the left hand side, there’s a coffee bar, and on the right a juice bar,” he explains.

“So I always knew about the concept since back then, but ironically ended up learning more about it in Thailand,” he adds as a matter of fact.

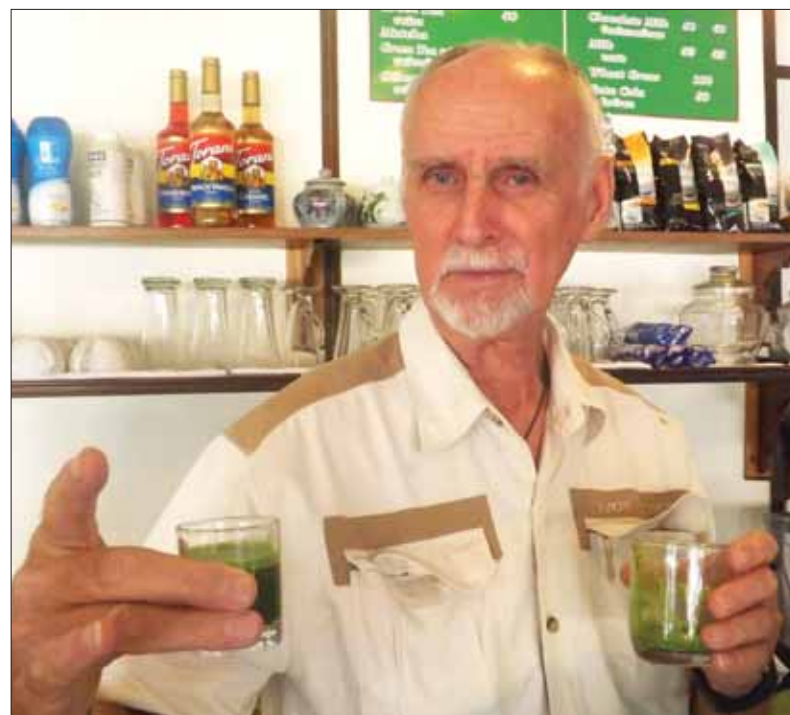
After closing his second hand shop to go into semi-retirement, Frank decided to fill in another ‘first’ niche in Phuket.

“It’s more than just health drinks and good coffee,” he insists, “It’s a good place to hang out in a relaxing atmosphere, have a conversation and exchange some good advice.”

Whether the conversation is about the cross over from eastern to western medicine, innovative ideas or just to reflect on the latest hustle and bustle that is rapidly overcoming our island, Lumpoon’s Second Cup Free is a nice place to stop in – the wheatgrass and coffee besides.

Asked about lessons he learned from his second-hand business, in which he could apply to the coffee-shop business, Frank said: “I initially thought that a majority of my customers would be farang (westerners), but that wasn’t the case, as 70 % of the people on this island are Thais.”

And, while his offering of premium coffee and naturally sweetened, nutrient rich wheatgrass are popular among health-conscious westerners, Frank is



SECOND CUP'S FREE: Frank Gunn got the idea of a juice bar and coffee shop from his days living in Northern California. Photo: Steven Layne



Frank and his partner, Daa, ready to make a fresh cutting of wheat grass.

definitely not going to ignore the local Thai market’s potential.

“Just look at the local Amazon coffee shop – it’s full of Thais,” he points out.

Frank is planning to diversify and expand his offering with soups and sandwiches.

Meanwhile, wheatgrass, along with a selection of premium grade

coffees, cappuccinos, slow and fast blended juices, smoothies, and an array of freshly baked and hand prepared goodies are the current offering at “Lumpoon’s Second Cup Free”, located just 10 meters east of Chalong circle, en route to Karon-Kata, on the left hand side.

All World Cup matches free

THE broadcasting committee of the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission earlier this week ruled that the 64 matches of next year’s FIFA World Cup soccer final must be televised over free-TV channels to comply with its “must-have” rule.

Music and entertainment giant RS, which holds the Thai broadcasting rights for the World Cup matches, had asked the NBTC to relax the rule to allow the company to air only selected matches on free-TV channels while the remaining matches would be aired on its pay-TV platform.

The must-have rule currently obliges it to air all matches on free-to-air television. Fully implemented late last year, the rule applies to seven events: the Southeast Asian Games, Asean Para Games, Asian Games,

Asian Para Games, Olympic Games, Paralympic Games and FIFA World Cup Finals, all of which the public must be able to access.

Natee Sukonrat, chairman of the broadcasting panel, said that in RS’s latest proposal, the company held that RS International Broadcasting and Sports Management, holder of the broadcasting rights to the World Cup final, did not obtain NBTC licences, so it was not subject to this rule.

Additionally, in a previous proposal to the NBTC, RS requested that the regulation be relaxed on grounds that the company held the rights to broadcast the soccer tournament before the must-carry rule was put in place. It proposed making only 22 of the tournament’s 64 matches available for free-to-air TV channels. – *The Nation*

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Dumping your UK domicile

Retirement Years

By David Mayes

MANY British expats are unaware that as long as they remain UK domiciled, their estates will be subject to inheritance tax. Even if you have been living outside of the country for 40 years, this doesn't mean you automatically have lost your UK domicile. In fact it is a little tricky to shed and this means your estate could end up paying 40% on anything above the nil rate band (currently at 325,000 pounds sterling).

There are two types of domicile; by origin and by choice. Domicile by origin obviously can't be changed and it is usually based on the domicile of the father. However one can establish a domicile of choice by choosing to make a permanent home somewhere abroad after they have reached the age of 16. To do this you not only have to prove your new home is permanent, but also that you have



If you have left the UK to seek sunnier climes, you might find the inheritance tax will follow you across the globe.

no intention to return to the UK.

This is where it gets tricky, as you could have "made a permanent home" in Spain for 20 years, but if you then up and move to Thailand, your domicile instantly returns back to domicile of origin.

Many expats who work for multinational corporations never settle in any one place, as they continuously have a new three-year contract and "home" after each "one changes, making it difficult to establish a domicile of choice during their working life. However,

once retired, it becomes a little easier.

The concept of a 'trust' was originally developed by the English courts and goes back to the middle ages. In essence it is an arrangement whereby one person, called a trustee, becomes the legal owner of any property transferred in by its owner, called the settlor. The trustee holds it for the benefit of another person, called the beneficiary. A trust can include just about anything from land, to shares, insurance policies and even physical gold.

If the settlor is excluded as a beneficiary from the trust, then when that person passes there will be no IHT to pay. However, UK domiciled individuals are restricted to the amount of assets they transfer into a trust without triggering a lifetime IHT charge (currently at 20%). Therefore one can gain a big advantage by losing their UK domicile, as they can then transfer the bulk of their assets into a trust and potentially avoid

any IHT, depending on the laws of their new domicile of course.

If you think your estate might be at risk of facing a large IHT bill, it is worth looking into what possible steps might be available to mitigate those risks. It may be transferring as much as possible into a trust if UK domicile cannot be lost, or it could be making a declaration of domicile of choice. One trust company I work with can obtain an opinion from the Queen's Council on domicile. If there is a lot of tax money at stake, seeking the proper advice may well be worth it.

David Mayes MBA resides in Phuket and provides wealth management services to expats around the globe, focusing on UK pension transfers. He can be reached at david.m@faramond.com or 085-335-8573. Faramond UK is regulated by the FSA and advises on pensions and taxation.

Capturing phuket through Google Glass

BY THE time the Christmas holidays roll around this year, I'll have one of the first sets of Google Glass in

Thailand. Imagine being able to walk our beautiful beaches here in Phuket and capture the sights, sounds and experiences hands-free. That's what Google Glass will allow me to do and most people here won't even realize that my 'glasses' can do everything my smartphone can do.

Google is getting ready to launch Google Glass sooner than expected. The launch was previously expected in 2014 but company CEO Sergey Brin has now publicly moved the launch to later this year.

At the Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) 2013 Conference last month, Brin performed a live demonstration of Google Glass. He said the product launch will occur just in time for the Christmas holiday shopping season.

The 'glass' field looks to be a competitive arena and Google is securing first-mover advantage. Other companies have filed patents indicating that they are developing a similar product. Microsoft, Apple, BlackBerry, Samsung and Sony are all rumored to be developing their own glass product. All these companies see the 'glass' market as the next big market after the mobile handset and smart phone device category.

With Google Glass, the user has a wearable computer that has the same features as a smartphone. Everything is visible through the head mounted display. The first demos that have been seen appear to look like regular eyeglasses. There's even speculation that one day the Google Glass can be fitted with prescription lenses.

Google Glass will operate via voice commands. If I want to take a picture or record a video, I just say 'take picture' or 'record video'. One of the most exciting aspects is that I can share what I'm currently seeing with anyone I want to via a Google Hangout or through Google+ or Gmail.

How many awesome sunsets or sunrises have we seen here in Phuket? I can record

Island Investor

By Don Freeman

the sunset or sunrise and shoot the live video and invite my friends to view it with me and see what I'm seeing with Google

Glass. So what I'll be doing is viewing the scene, recording it and talking to my friends at the same time as we all watch it. It'll be like having them with me.

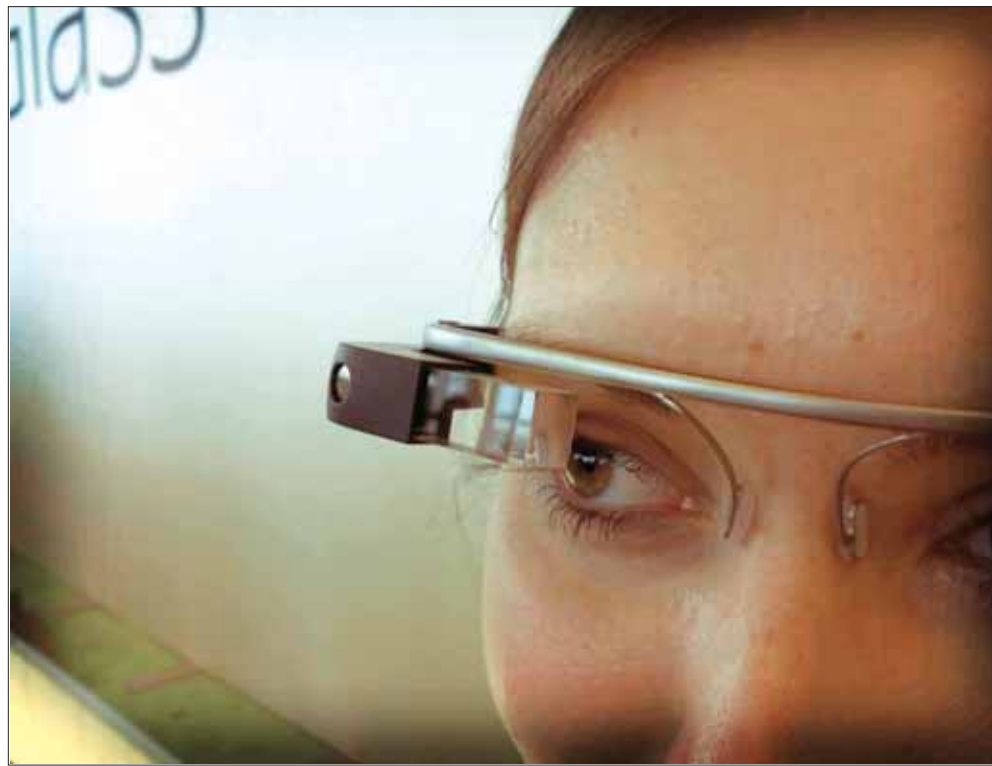
For me the most exciting and functional aspect to Google Glass, is the ability to incorporate directions and maps visually. I've always wondered why Google spent so much time and money with Google Street View and mapping the entire world. Now I know why. With Google Glass, you can ask for directions and it will give them to you in Google Glass. Now when you're driving or walking, you have the directions right in front of you completely hands-free.

Google has effectively bundled all of their services into a usable wearable computer. If you want to Google something, just ask and the answer will show up in Google Glass. If I need to translate something into Thai, I just ask Google Glass and I get the translation and pronunciation. As all of us expats know living here in Thailand, this feature alone is priceless and makes Google Glass worthwhile.

The glasses themselves are strong and light. Colors that will be available available include charcoal, tangerine, shale, cotton and sky. Recently Google CEO Larry Page went on the New York City subway wearing the glasses and most people failed to recognize that he was wearing Google Glasses.

The deeper I delve into the Google Glass product, the more excited I get about the stock. Google's stock continues to make new highs and the stock is up 16% so far this year and up 45% since June 2012. Most analysts price targets for Google now range from \$900 to \$1000.

The company has a forward P/E of 15 and that's still very cheap for a growth company. Google has an operating margin of 26%, which is one of the highest in the industry. Google has over \$48 billion in cash on its balance sheet, or \$145 per share.



WEARABLE COMPUTER: Google Glass is set to revolutionize how users interact with mobile computing devices. Photo: Antonio Zugaldia

The momentum players see a compelling valuation and a company with tremendous growth prospects. The creation of the Google Glass product is truly revolutionary.

Technologists have been wanting to create a wearable computer for the past 50 years, but none have been able to do it and develop a commercial product. Google looks to have done that and that's why I'm not only buying Google Glass, but also buying Google stock.

Don Freeman is president of Freeman Capital Management, a Registered Investment Advisor with the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC), based in Phuket, Thailand. He has over 15 years experience and provides personal financial planning and wealth management to expatriates. Specializing in UK and US pension transfers. Call 089-970-5795 or email: freemancapital@gmail.com.

10 COOL THINGS YOU CAN DO WITH GOOGLE GLASS

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- Travel alerts.
- Access Google Maps and get directions.
- Translate signs into your own language.
- Navigate inside buildings.

Indian tycoon eyes Thailand

ASGAR Patel, group chairman of India-based multinational House of Patels, and one of the wealthiest people in India and the United Arab Emirates, earlier this week expressed an interest in investing in Phuket's property market.

"We are interested in investing in the Thai property sector not only in Bangkok, but also in other locations such as Hua Hin and Phuket. If they have the best location and design, we will expand our investment in both destinations," he said.

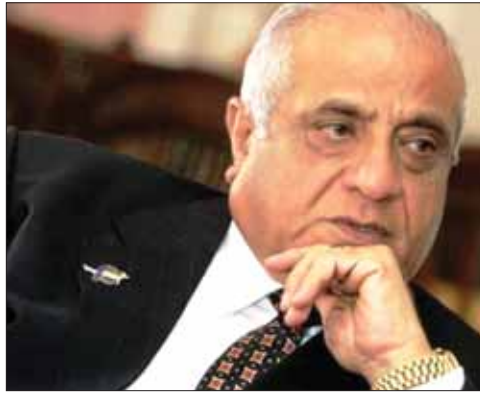
The wealthy businessman was quoted in a report by *The Nation* that focused on his recent investment in what will soon be Thailand's largest skyscraper, the 314-meter MahaNakhon building, being constructed in Bangkok's in Sathon-Silom area.

Patel, who lives in the UAE, decided to invest 480 million baht early this year in the luxury Bangkok condominium project, the Ritz-Carlton Residence at MahaNakhon, after seeing the potential return given Thailand's stable economic growth and the fact that the Kingdom will be at the center of the Asean Economic Community, which comes into effect in 2015.

Patel, whose firm has interests in real estate, financial services, transport and logistics, said that when he expanded his investment in the property sector, he had first examined the state of Thailand's economy, and then considered the location and project design.

"Besides, Thailand has a large middle-class

PROPERTY
Gazette



Asgar Patel may invest in Phuket.

population who are gaining wealth that will support future development. Again, Singapore and Hong Kong are both saturated and overpriced, and have hardly any land mass left.

A road is proposed from Kolkata through Myanmar into Thailand and, when the AEC is implemented, Thailand will be the heart of Asia. China, India and Japan are investing in Thailand. So, it is logical to invest in this growing economy," said Patel.



THE GREAT CITY: The MahaNakhon building will be the tallest building in Thailand.

Following his own investment in the Ritz-Carlton Residence at MahaNakhon, the House of Patels Group has acquired the luxury project's marketing and sales rights for India and the Gulf Cooperation Council area, confirming his belief in the Thai property market.

Patel has also invested in property in the United States, India and Dubai.

Pace Development Corp chief executive

Sorapoj Techakraisri, whose company developed the luxury mixed-use MahaNakhon project, said that up to 60 per cent of its customers were foreign buyers working in Singapore, Hong Kong and Dubai.

Since the MahaNakhon project's launch in 2009, unit prices have been increased by an average of 5 per cent a year from the original presales price of Bt220,000 per square meter. – *The Nation / Phuket Gazette*



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The season of our discontent

ANYONE who has ever taken a cross-country road trip can certainly

understand the blurred state of fatigue known as ‘white line fever’; late night driving as the music drums steadily into the oncoming darkness.

This is the time that your imagination wreaks havoc in the mulched up madness of what can be summed up as “too far, too long and too fast.” Barring a head-on collision and death in a fiery inferno, the only real escape is a bit of pillow time.

It’s been a long and hard high season here in Phuket. The local populace is tenser than a sun-dried cracker; punctuating the dry surroundings has been the absence of rain. Tempers are flaring and the natives are restless. As our hero Hunter S. Thompson cried out in another distant desert, “Oh Lord, how long?”

Even the all too familiar departure lounge of Phuket International Airport is showing fatigue. Tattered carpets and furniture which have been ripped to shreds. Damn, someone let out a wild pack of Komodo dragons. Thankfully they either eat their young, or else have been thrown into a fake Adidas bag and are now halfway to Chengdu en-route to a waiting dinner table.



Property Watch
By Bill Barnett

Thankfully Songkran, as it does each year, brought rain and the promise

of an all too soon wet season. Over the past few years the marketing types have gyrated from *slow, low, off* or the absolute worst moniker – *green* season. I’m not quite sure what to do at the end of *green* season, as the lushness remains. Perhaps get a pair of polarized shades and go yellow or blue?

Each and every year since I’ve moved to the island the changing of the seasons brings out the migration of the ‘boo birds’. May and September always rank as the low periods for tourism, and the trend pushes well into much of June. But more dependable than clockwork is the bar talk, online chat and general malaise amongst the local populace that the Phuket story has finally ended.

Jim Morrison said it so well in “The End”, but in Phuket the commentary is always so predictable – about how the island is finished, things will never be the same and travellers have forgotten about the destination. I can hear the whining in my mind like a low drone of sheep heading off over the cliff of self-induced misery.

“Oh Lord, how long?” springs to mind. For my part *slow* season means being able to drive from



THE END IS NIGH?: We don’t think so. Photo: Daniel Gadal

Laguna to Rawai in less than two hours. Hope springs eternal, as I am able to find a parking spot at Central or the airport. I breeze through the highways and byways like a newly-minted Michael Schumacher.

Yes, Phuket has changed, is changing and will change with time. Where on Earth isn’t it changing? North Korea springs to mind. A few years ago I wrote a similar piece, which ran along the comedic lines of ‘love it or leave

it’. An outcry was heard, that still has my ears ringing. Yes, the people can and should be heard. Except in Syria or North Korea that is.

My only request is just don’t tell me about it. I’m far too busy walking on an empty beach, or sitting in my car basking in the victory of parking success.

Phuket continues to be my favorite place to live, for better or for worse, in ‘high season’ or ‘low season’. As they say in the writ-

ing game, or fight club: “if you want to dish it out, be prepared to take it on at its very ugliest”.

That’s all on this subject, the lines are blurring and my head is about to burst. While many are happy to be discontent I am quite happy to pass my time here in the land of many seasons – Phuket.

Bill Barnett is the Managing Director of C9 Hotelworks and can be contacted through C9hotelworks.com



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Asking for a second opinion

The need for legal advice upon the purchase of property, and the right to a second opinion

MANY times prospective buyers of property in Thailand search online for legal information in

regards to their purchase. They soon discover that online legal advice varies depending on the law office, lawyer or advisor providing the information.

In some cases advice is given which recommends that to secure an investment in property a Thai company should be incorporated to hold legal title, or that the investor should secure a 30-year registered leasehold (50 years for commercial property with possible extension). Other times, an advisor recommends that a superficies or usufruct be registered against the land title in favor of the investor, or to simply secure a registered lifetime right to possess and reside on the land. Some suggest that prospective purchasers gift the purchase money to be used for the investment to their Thai wife or Thai partner – who, as Thais, may lawfully hold title to land in their own names. Still others suggest only purchasing condominium units, which may be lawfully owned and registered into the name of foreign nationals.

From the above, you can see that there are many ways to secure an investment in property in Thailand. Depending on the spe-

Property Legal

By International Law Office

cific needs and circumstances of the individual buyer, one method or another may be the most

suitable for any individual case. To be sure, there are differences of opinion as to which methods may best serve a specific buyer, and it is in the best interest of every prospective purchaser of land or property in Thailand to receive, prior to their purchase, proper legal advice fully informing them of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the possible methods and vehicles of property ownership.

Factors to consider include whether the purchased property can be passed on through a last will, whether the property rights can be sold or transferred to third parties and under what circumstances may their property rights be renewed or extended. The experience of the particular law office, lawyer or advisor selected by the buyer will play a crucial role in the quality of their advice. Always select attorneys who have experience defending contracts in courts of law and who are up to date with the ever-changing property laws and regulations of the land office. Law offices/attorneys who are personally familiar with the land office and its policies and regulations should be consulted,



ALLURING: When buying property in Thailand, always seek a second opinion. Photo: Sansiri

as the interpretation of the laws and regulations by such a land official is valuable – any contracts for property purchase must be registered against a the land title which has to be accepted by the land officer in charge.

We wholeheartedly agree with other advisors that proper legal advice should be sought before entering into any agreements, including reservation agreements, and before any monies are paid. Further, while it is always important to discuss your individual situation and needs with a skilled and qualified lawyer/advisor, it is also desirable to get a second opinion as the advice you may initially receive may vary depending on the experience and knowledge of your advisor and the particular purchase structure you first chose. A law office or advisor who can also offer tax advice on the tax liabilities of owning/renting out property or upon its later

sale is an advantage to have. If your attorney is not a tax specialist, you may wish to seek additional and independent advice from a tax advisor for added protection.

On Phuket, the prospective buyer has a great choice of international law offices, Thai law offices, Thai lawyers with proper command of the English and other languages, and advisory offices who can offer sound advice in many different languages. The Phuket Gazette Guide is a good source for legal services as it provides listings to many law offices/lawyers in Phuket.

This article is written by International Law Office Patong Beach Co., Ltd., since 1995 a Phuket based law firm. In case of enquiries, please contact Friedrich 'Sam' Fauma, Senior Partner and Consultant, by email: sam@ilo-phuket.com or phone +66-(0) 76-222 191-5.



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Don't ignore the signs

MANKIND, the first of nature's creations so "fully evolved" that some of our number willingly end their own lives.

For those among us who have never had to battle depression, the very idea of committing suicide probably seems like the ultimate waste. After all, our time on this inexplicable stage called "life" is ephemeral enough indeed – why make it any shorter?

Scientists tell us that the Earth has been around for 4.5 billion years, but the longest we can hope to spend on it is about 100 years.

This works out to a percentage so tiny that it cannot even be computed by the typical desktop calculator. We live in an incredible age. We can type 'how old is the universe?' into a search engine like Google and the answer pops up instantaneously in big, bold letters: 13.77 billion years.

Nowadays we have instant answers for just about everything, but when it comes to figuring out why some people choose to end their own lives (see News feature pages 4-5] the reasons are not so simple.

Those among us so unfortunate as to have to endure chronic pain may view suicide as a final way out of suffering, or even as an act of compassion towards those who, motivated by love, have worked hard to provide us with the care we can no longer provide ourselves.

Demographic researchers might view a rising trend in suicide rates as more of a "rats in a cage" statistical phenomena, dismissing it as the inevitable consequence of global overpopulation – a subject that gets far less attention than it deserves by mainstream media.

Most baffling is when healthy and talented young people choose to nip their own existence in the bud. All too often they tend to be empathic and creative types, like Kurt Cobain, who gave much enjoyment to many others, but nevertheless found existence too unbearable to endure.

As unpalatable as it may be, we all have to accept the fact that we will be dead 100 years from now. Deal with that reality as you will, but the real challenge to each and every one of us is how to optimize this incredible opportunity we call life. We may not know why we are here or what happens after we die, but one thing is pretty clear: actions based on greed, self-interest and other inhumane, narcissistic traits seldom, if ever, bring happiness.

Phuket may brand itself as a "sea, sun and sky" destination, but for far too many visitors it also becomes, quite literally, a tragic "last resort". For this reason, each and every one of us should be aware of the signs and be prepared to reach out if those among us appear to be suicidal.

Few experiences in life are more satisfying than helping others; saving the life of another is the ultimate form of this. As the old expression goes: the life you save might be your own.



Can't find a parking spot at the airport

Re: Gazette online: Former illegal taxi drivers pressure AOT chief over Phuket Airport counter, April 24

A shame AOT (Airports of Thailand) can't push them all out of the car park and into the huge tarmac space next door so paying customers can use the car park.

A holding area and a call forward system – not difficult.

It's pointless driving up and trying to park your own vehicle there with a flight to catch as the chances of finding a space are limited by the taxis parked up – I've nearly missed flights before.

The answer – I have to take a taxi!

Mister Ree
Gazette Forum

Letters to the Editor

Do you have an opinion to voice?
Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net

tent monitoring by local authorities and fines for offending construction companies.

Public Health Professional
Gazette Forum

...and the ones in old tyres too

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Governor combats dengue with '333' strategy, April 23

Emptying standing water in flower pots is fine, but who is ensuring that local officials identify and eliminate truly significant mosquito hatching sites around the island?

There is for example a huge pile of old automobile tyres laying near the road just north of the Baan Suan Layan Restaurant near Layan Beach in Thalang.

These tyres collect water and are perfect breeding grounds for mosquitos.

Sunseeker
Gazette Forum

No satisfaction after robbery

Yesterday morning I was assaulted and robbed of my gold necklace while on my way for my daily walk on Patong Beach.

Luckily, a nice Thai lady witnessed the incident and called the police for me.

She also had the wisdom of noting the license plate number of the motorbike they used to flee the scene which she gave to the attending police officers.

Then when I went to Patong Police Station to file the report, the

officer on duty (who was sound asleep in his chair when I arrived) was totally disinterested and quite unprofessional.

There was not even a follow-up on the license plate number – which I would suggest would reveal the address of the criminal.

I have been left emotionally shaken by this incident and furthermore have no confidence that even a very basic police investigation would have recovered my stolen item and brought this criminal to justice.

Steve
Patong

Pondering the Patong tunnel

Re: Gazette online, B1bn Patong Tunnel payout 'not enough', say residents, April 25

First of all... I tip my hat to Khun Jamras for bringing up environmental concerns and for taking a strong stance with fellow residents and not giving in easily.

Secondly, a question for Mayor Pian: Does Patong Hill really need to be landscaped to look even more beautiful than ever?

How about making it a lot safer first? That should be the priority. Remember the sinkhole you almost fell into?

Lingba
Gazette Forum

Tunnel vision

Re: Gazette online, B1bn Patong Tunnel payout 'not enough', say residents, April 25

1bn baht to 20 households means an average of 50 million to each, so why are they not happy?

Drop the tunnel or make it somewhere else.

Patong is crowded and dirty already. Why facilitate access to that?

Sailor
Gazette Forum

Phuket Gazette

In association with The Nation Multimedia Group PCL

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The views expressed in the Phuket Gazette are those of the writers and contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher, the Editor, the shareholders or the directors of The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd.

Volume 20 Issue 18

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Is cholera far behind?

Re: Gazette online, Phuket hotels, businesses targeted in dirty beach canal probe April 24

In 1849, over 14,000 Londoners died of cholera, caused by drinking water contaminated by sewage, so just how far behind is Phuket?

The main issue is that no building should be built unless sewage can be safely removed from the site, this really is a failing of local building authorities and those charged with providing sewers and treatment plants.

Underground tanks will contaminate underground water.

Laurie Howells
Gazette Forum

Get the mozzies at construction sites

Re: Gazette online, Phuket Governor combats dengue with '333' strategy, April 23

Just look at the number of construction sites with large areas of undrained water. We don't need 333 campaigns, we need consis-

Finding life balance through Daodexinxi

FIRST PERSON

PEOPLE in the modern world are making a great deal of unnecessary sacrifices. Youths give up their vital energy to gain wealth at the sacrifice of their mental and physical health, and then, as we grow older and see the condition of our health faltering, we use the money and power we have gained and attempt to buy back our youth.

This is an unhealthy cycle, as there is a balance between seeking riches and maintaining a healthy mind and body. One of the many ways a person can pursue this balance is through a practice known as Daodexinxi (Daoxin).

Daoxin is a new practice – it has only been around since about 1990 – but it incorporates many traditional Chinese beliefs and borrows from Tao Te Ching, Tai Chi and some modern scientific concepts.

It was started in China by Zhao Miao Guo, and in 1996 came to Thailand, where it has grown in popularity. Today, people come to Thailand from China to study it.

Currently, there are over 200 members in our Phuket Daodexinxi Club, which receives the support of the Phuket Provincial Administration Organization.

Dao means nature or the law of nature, De means virtue, and Xinxi means media, including written and spoken words, songs and music.

We believe that a combination of physical movements, meditation and music can help us to be happy and healthy, and create a more peaceful and loving society.

Three of the physical techniques we practice are Daoxin dancing, poses and movements.



Sopin Koaysomboon, a 53-year-old Phuket native, is a vice president of the Phuket Daodexinxi International Club. She has been practicing Daodexinxi for more than three years.

Here, she talks about how to improve our lives with exercise, meditation, songs and charity.

If you take part in one of our events you will do each of these.

We start with dancing – we dance slowly and move our bodies in a relaxing way. As we are dancing, we press our heels and the balls of our feet into the ground because we believe that pressing the balls of our feet stimulates the liver and pressing the heels stimulates the kidneys. And of course the dancing helps firm our bodies.

We have nine poses, taken from Tai Chi. We believe that these poses will stimulate blood circulation in nine main body systems, such as the neurological, digestive and respiratory systems. By assuming the different poses, we also promote the flow of Chi (energy) in our bodies.

Finally, the slow movements – they are a form of moving meditation. We believe that the movements balance the mind and body.

As we're doing the three physical exercises we listen to music and songs. The song lyrics include concepts from the Tao Te Ching and focus on love, gratitude, humility, thriftiness, patience and being united with nature.

We think that music, singing, words and thoughts can create positive changes in our bodies and can assist us through life challenges.

Daoxin is more than just physical and mental practices – it is a lifestyle. Altogether, there are eight aspects of Daoxin – the three physical exercises, singing, meditation, reading from the Tao Te Ching, doing volunteer work and chanting; all of these we believe 'develop our body's software'.

Dr Chotinuch Tungabordee at Phuket Provincial Hospital is a good example of the effectiveness of Daoxin. After she broke her neck in a car accident, she used Daoxin as physical therapy. It was so helpful for her that she now hosts an exercise session in the parking lot of the hospital.

Another place we meet to practice Daoxin is in the parking lot of Queen Sirikit Park, Monday to Thursday from 5:30 to 7pm. We also meet at Rama IX Park (Suan Luang) on Chao Fa Road, Monday to Friday from 7am to 8:30am. Everyone is welcome to come, and there is no charge.

Every Friday we have sessions where we meditate on the elimination of disasters. That's at 5pm at Muang Phuket Municipal School.

We also have a retreat in Kanchanaburi where you can go and stay for several days.

For more information, please call 081-6919327 or 081-5352197.



Head to the provinces for practice, you can't do it here. Photo: Dean Noble

Learning to drive

Island View

By Damian Evans

Do you have an opinion to voice?
Email Editor@PhuketGazette.net

EVERY motorist I have ever met remembers the day they were issued their driver's license and got behind the wheel... legally. My wife enjoyed that day only this week.

The joyous occasion came after months of trying to teach her to drive on the streets of Phuket, where we were slowly denied the opportunity of practicing away from the island's notoriously dangerous traffic. We were banned from our chosen test tracks one by one.

At first, self-preservation guided our thoughts as we crossed off Thepkrasattri Road, the bypass road, anywhere near the busy coastal and beach areas that are flooded by tourists whizzing by at breakneck speed on their inaugural motor scooter flights.

We considered shopping mall car parks, then realized how silly we were being.

So we headed for the car park of the Phuket Land Transport Office (PLTO) itself, laughingly to discover that was where all the learner drivers in Phuket Town practiced on the weekends. The lovely guard allowed people in, and the weekends saw a slow procession of vehicles winding their way through the traffic islands and marked off lanes in the car park.

Then the guard told us the honeymoon was over; some big wig said no civilians were allowed to practice there anymore. So we tried somewhere closer to home: a quiet housing estate off Kwang Road,

between Wichit and Chalong.

This, too, was short-lived. After two Sundays of slow meandering through the streets, a volatile farang exited his middle-income mansion and approached the car while my wife was driving slowly past his house.

She was alone in the vehicle with our two-year-old baby asleep in the safety seat. I was watching from the curb. I had opted to exit the vehicle so my wife could practice without the nervous tension of a back-seat driver in the front passenger seat.

The circumstances didn't stop the man from opening the car door himself and confronting my wife to ask her, "What are you doing? This is my house."

My wife pointed to me and explained she was learning to drive. "Well you can't keep driving around here," she was told.

So, without anywhere in Phuket to safely learn to drive, my wife headed off home to sunny Trang province, where within three weeks she has practiced enough to pass her test.

My best wishes go out to all other learner drivers in Phuket. I hope they have a "Trang" to call their own. They're gonna need it.

Issues & Answers... ...asking the questions that affect you...

Legal driver's licenses

I have heard from various friends that the police stop foreign motorists and ask for their international driver's license (especially on the way to the airport, when drivers are in a hurry).

If a driver only has a driver's license from his home country, he is fined 1,000 baht and a receipt is not issued.

Is this a common practice by the police? Can I refuse to pay a fine unless I am issued a receipt?

Uti
Cherngtalay

Sarawut Meeboon, Thalang Police Deputy Superintendent, replies:

You need to have either an international driver's license or a Thai driver's license to drive legally in Thailand. If you have

neither, you are subject to a 1,000-baht fine.

It is illegal for a policeman to accept payment for a fine and not give you a receipt.

You can ask for a receipt. If he refuses to issue it, please report him to the local police station.

And keep in mind that whenever you are issued a ticket, you may pay it at the local police station.

Send us your queries and we'll ask the right people to respond to them.
Submit your issue at
www.PuketGazette.net/IssuesAnswers

Where to take Fido for a dip

Is there a law that says you cannot bring your dog to the beach in the morning?

There have been some problems on some of the islands in the area.

I was told on one of the islands that because it is a Muslim island, no dogs are allowed.

I always thought that the beach between the high and low tide mark was available for everybody's use.

Horst
Rawaii

Thaweeb Muangsuwan, Phuket Provincial Officer, replies:

There is no law preventing a person from bringing a dog on to the beach at any time of the day.

However, there are some ar-



Show a little sensitivity when taking dogs to the beach. Photo: Gazette file

reas that are heavily populated by local Muslim communities, and for cultural reasons, bringing a dog onto those beaches is inappropriate.

I would suggest not bringing

dogs into these areas to prevent any misunderstandings.

If someone asks you to keep your dog out of the area, I think it is best for you to respect their request.

YOUR

Phuket

Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation

Representatives of JW Marriott Phuket Resort & Spa, led by the GM and Chairman of the Mai Khao Marine Turtle Foundation, Tony Pedroni (right) and Marketing and Communications Manager Kewalin Sukumjittanon (left) visited Phuket Governor Maitri Inthasut to offer a certificate to thank him for his support of the fourth Mai Khao Turtle Release.



Thai Chess Competition



Phuket City Mayor Somjai Suwansuppana hands certificates to students who completed a summer course in *makluk* (Thai chess) during a ceremony at the Phuket Merlin Hotel on Friday, April 26. The ceremony featured a series of spectacular performances by the visiting Chinese ‘Talented Juvenile Troupe’ from Huaqiao University. The town offered a total of 28 courses, with hundreds of children taking part. Photo: Sanda Fein

Sunday brunch at
Banyan Tree Hotel
& Resorts Phuket

From left are Banyan Tree Executive Thai Sous-Chef Pichet Kitkha, Executive Chef David Hamilton and Executive Sous-Chef Steven Kim. Photo: Marc Mulloy

For Pete’s sake

Friends and family celebrated Peter Wood's birthday at the Ao Chalong Yacht Club on Sunday

From left are Wan Mulloy, Dan Darcey, Peter Wood, Kevin Gillow and Irish honorary consul H I ne Fallon-Wood. Photo: Marc Mulloy

Best Italian Chefs in Phuket

The Thai-Italian chamber of commerce brought their *Ospitalita Italiana* project to Phuket last week, awarding five Italian restaurants ‘Q’ certificates of authenticity. The restaurants are judged as ‘authentically Italian’ based on criteria such as: chef’s training, number of traditional dishes on the menu, use of Italian products and decor. ‘Q’ rankings are available online and via an iPhone app, allowing travellers to easily find genuine Italian restaurants worldwide.

from left: Salvatore Cossu, Salvatore’s; Alessandro Frau, Acqua Restaurant; Jana Sasikova and Claudio Pivotto, Da Vinci; Maggie Cossi, Maggie & Mario’s; and Maurizio Laureri, Da Maurizio.

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*The Gazette is the top-ranked Website for Phuket. (Google Analytics)

JOB of the week

The **PARADISE KOH YAO**
Boutique Beach Resort & Spa

'Island hideaway near Phuket'

See page 27

PROPERTY of the week

Condo in Patong

See page 23

BOAT of the week

LEE MARINE
International Marine Brokerage
SINCE 1997



See page 31

PROPERTY SERVICES of the week

Thailand's Leading Property Site
DDproperty
.com



See page 25

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Properties For Sale

LAND ON KOH LON ISLAND



Flat land for sale. 3 rai, 150m from beach. Price: 6.5 million baht per rai. Email: kohlon@hotmail.com

PATONG BEAUTIFUL CONDOS

Freehold, sell together or separate. Tel: 088-846 3467 (English). Email: sellingcartel@hotmail.com

PRIVATE SALE OF HALF ARAI

At Ao Makham. Land is located opposite Port of Phuket and next to Bel Air Cape Panwa Resort. Price 4.2 million. For more information please call: 081-891 5932, 089-035 6702.

HOUSE IN VILLA DOWROONG

Phuket Town. 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 47sq wah. Tel: 089-909 2771.

SINGLE HOUSE FOR SALE/ RENT



In Thanapa Park View village in Koh Kaew. 57sq wah, with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, a carpark and a garden. Sale: 2.25 million baht. Rent: 11,000 baht per month. Contact owner. Tel: 089-615 9719. Email: nana1225@gmail.com

CONDO AT ROYAL PLACE



Condo at Royal Place Project, bypass road, opposite Tesco Lotus. 37sqm, 2fl, 1 bedroom, 1 bathroom, kitchen, fully furnished (2 aircons, washing machine, refrigerator, TV, microwave, cable TV, 24 security with key card etc). Pls contact for more details. Tel: 086-476 9612. Email: annanoi1@hotmail.com

HOUSE & FURNITURE

Single house, 60sqm. 2 floors, 3 bedrooms and 3 toilets. In Chaipruek Village at Land & Houses Park, Chalong. Good location and entrance from bypass road. Built 2 years ago. Tel: 084-627 7001.

D CONDO 1, KATHU

-29.94sqm, mountain view, price 1,278,000 baht.
-29.70sqm, mountain view, price 1,280,000 baht.
-29.79sqm, pool view, price 1,330,000 baht.
-29.70sqm, pool view, price 1,365,000 baht.
Contact Vutdy on 081-892 3709.

KRABI, AO NANG

3 plots of land, each 420sqm, each 850,000 baht. House plan with building permit. 2 bedrooms, pool. Email: mr.axelmay@gmail.com

30 RAI IN TOWN

Flat land near Dowroong School in Phuket Town. Tel: 081-691 2526.

LAND NEAR KATA CENTER

Great location, road access, 5 mins to Kata Beach and main road, 1,450sqm with title deed. Contact Lychee. Tel: 081-891 3048 (English & German).

COMMERCIAL BUILDING

For sale or long lease. Situated in a great location on main road, Phang Muang Soi 3. Ideal for restaurant and apartment. 15 rooms, key money. 1.5 million baht. Rent: 120,000 baht. Must see! Tel: 081-396 0880. Email: Sumonmarn@phuketreallife.com

HABITIA KOH KAEW



Modern style, Chino-Portuguese, area: 36.50sq wah with 118sqm living space approx. 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 car park. Sale down payment 500,000 baht. Tel: 087-270 9093.

URGENT SALE/ RENT



House in Patong. Newly built 40sq wah, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 storeys, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircon, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 086-476 9612.

CONDO IN SUPALAI PARK



for sale. Near Sengho Bookstore in Phuket Town. Studio, 30sqm, floor 15, sea view, aircon, furnished. Price: 1.9 million baht. Ready to move in. For more info call 089-472 9118.

HOUSE FOR SALE IN BAAN PROMPHAN

2.5 floors, 5 mins to town, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms. Good for stay! 2.85 million baht. Tel: 083-506 9155. Email: sumitra.saetan@gmail.com

4 BED, 4 BATH SECURE VILLA

10 minutes to international schools, 15 minutes to Patong and Central, aircons, pool, sala, fully furnished. 14.9 million baht negotiable. Tel: +61-8-6161 2691, +61-43-592 2900 (English), +61-46-831 5377 (English & Thai). Fax: +61-86-161 2691. Email: donmountford@gmail.com

RENT 3 BEDROOMS 2 BATHROOMS

Furnished. Supalai Hill, near Heroines Monument. Tel: 083-649 1218.

HOT DEAL - CONDO AT THE POINT



Opposite to Big C, one bedroom with nice view includes furniture. Price: 3.8 million. Negotiable. Tel: 082-276 1817, 081-614 5372.

HOUSE IN PHUKET VILLA 5 FOR SALE



46sq wah, furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, carpark. Only 3.5 million baht. Tel: 081-787 7675.

HOUSE IN KAMALA



For sale. 2 houses on land. 1 ngan 89sq wah. Chanote title, near mountain, peaceful and safe, 10 minutes from the beach. 5.5 million baht direct from owner. Tel: 089-615 9719. Email: nana1225@gmail.com

QUIET PENTHOUSE AT PCC

Freehold, 3-bed, furnished. 6.45 million baht. Tel: 081-676 0740 (English & Thai). Email: mail@phuketgolfcondo.com www.phuketgolfcondo.com

LAND NAI HARN 2,200SQM

Very good access, road, water, electric. Back of Mangosteen Resort, Sai Yuan 9. Price 10.9 million baht (7.7 per rai). Tel: 087-897 0501 (English). Email: aleksa@thai-evagroup.com

CHEAP LAND FOR SALE

Close to Phuket International Airport. 4 rai, Chanote title. 3.8 million baht per rai. Tel: 081-868 7676. Email: phuketann@gmail.com

NEW TOWNHOUSE AT PHUKET TOWN

2 storey American-style townhouse with 3 beds, 2 baths, parking lot, garden. Furnished. Sale 3.2 million baht or rent 18,000 baht. Tel: 081-978 1558. Email: keng.na.ranong@hotmail.com

LARGE HOUSE KAMALA

Furnished, 280sqm, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, office, sundeck, 2 pools, jacuzzi, carport. Sale: 3.4 million baht. 18 years left on lease. Or rent: 32,000 baht per month, minimum 6 month contract period. Located within Condo Complex. Tel: 084-716 0502.

PATONG LUXURY CONDO SALE

2 beds, 1 bathroom, living room and fully equipped kitchen, 98sqm. Very high std, nice view. Big balcony, 2 swimming pools, gym, quiet location. 7.5 million or N/O. Tel: 080-052 8082 (English). Email: phvcondo@aol.com

QUICK SALE, SOI SUKSAN 2, RAWAI

1 rai/0.5 rai, Chanote. Concrete road and electric access. Tel: 089-472 9870, 086-471 5226. Email: dchaibut@gmail.com

FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE FOR SALE



Chao Fah Garden Home 3 in Koh Kaew near BIS, 10 mins to Lotus. 2 beds, 2 baths, 2 aircons. Nice living & kitchen room, car park, fully furnished. Ready to move in. 2.85 million baht near Boat Lagoon. Tel: 081-541 2025. Email: c.junlarat@gmail.com

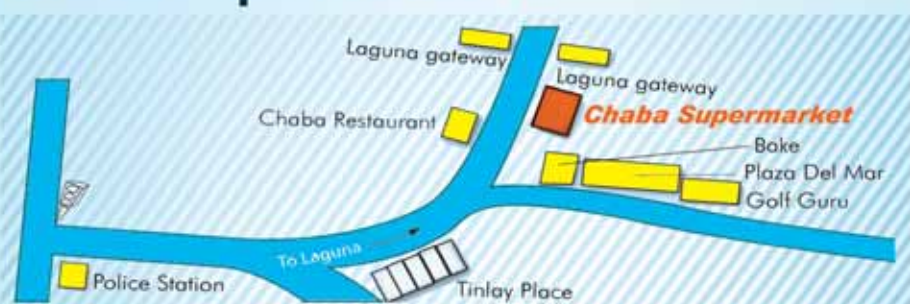
PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



For sale. Price 4.5 million baht. No agents, no furnished, with 4 aircons, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen and car park. Behind Kajonkiet International School on Chao Fa West Road, 5 minutes to Central Festival. For short or long-term rent, 16,000 baht per month. Call to see 087-270 9093.

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Start from 12,000-18,000 baht per month. Fully furnished. Tel: 089-795 6363. Email: vicky_grc@hotmail.com

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PATONG RENTAL

10,000 baht per month. Long term. Tel: 088-846 3467 (English). Email: sellingcartel@hotmail.com

B.L. APARTMENT

At Kathu, 1 bedroom, 1 living room, aircon, cable TV, ADSL, hot shower, swimming pool, garden and car park. Rent: 7,000 baht per month. Tel: 081-692 3163.

COZY HOUSE NEAR NAI HARN



A high-grade built house, furnished and conveniently located minutes from Rawai and Nai Harn Beaches. 2 spacious bedrooms with en suite bathrooms. 1 guest toilet. Aircons. Large living-dining room. Telephone line with ADSL. Free water supply and garbage removal service. 22,000 baht per month. Tel: 087-383 0936 (Khun Nui). Email: hunt17@hotmail.com

PHUKET VILLA 5 VILLAGE



For sale. Price: 4.2 million baht. No agents! Not furnished, with 4 aircons, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen and car park. Behind Kajonkiet International School on Chao Fa West Road, 5 minutes to Central Festival. For short or long-term rent, 16,000 baht per month. Call to see 087-270 9093.

KATA OCEAN VIEW CONDO

Fully furnished, seaview and non-seaview apartments, available for long-term rental. From 15,000 to 40,000 baht per month. Located on Kata Hill. Tel: 076-330641. For further details, please see our website at www.oceanic-global.com

LOVELY HOUSE 14,000 BAHT/ MONTH

Furnished, WiFi, cable TV, pool. Near Chalong Marina. Tel: 089-475 1200. Email: info@welcome-inn.com

KATA BEACH OCEANFRONT APARTMENT

1 bedroom, luxury living, 75sqm, pools, gym, gardens, quiet area. Only 30,000 baht per month. Email: asiasail@yahoo.com For further details, please see our website at www.katasala.com



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Rent or buy a house on my island? Maybe I can help you. My name is Wellita

3-BEDROOM POOL VILLA

Thai style with full furniture, Bang Tao area. 50,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-795 6363. Email: vicky_grc@hotmail.com

KATHU GOLF VIEW VILLA

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HOUSE AT PRIME PLACE VILLAGE



Near Heroines' Monument. Furnished, aircon, 3 bedrooms, cable TV, kitchen. 25,000 baht per month with 30,000 baht deposit. Tel: 086-607 7493.

RAWAI 3-BED POOL HOUSE 28,000 BAHT

2 storeys, 2 baths, 3 aircon units. Fully equipped, nice and quiet. May - Oct: 28,000 baht per month + bills, internet. Tel: 085-478 8010, 085-478 8216. Email: c9000@gmx.de

RENT APARTMENT KARON

4 floor, seaview, 130sqm, 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2 pools, 600m to sea. 1 year contract. 50,000 baht per month. Tel: 086-131 5458.

TOWNHOUSE FOR RENT IN TOWN

Fully furnished, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 3 aircons, very good location, close to Central Festival and Makro, entrance is in front of Headstart International School. Tel: 081-719 7015. Email: jyfieviet@gmail.com

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT



Thalang. 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, fully furnished, cable TV, kitchen. Tel: 081-396 4264.

SINGLE HOUSE FOR RENT/ SALE



In Thanapa Park View village in Koh Kaew. 57sqm, with 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, a kitchen, a carpark and a garden. Rent: 11,000 baht per month. Sale: 2.25 million baht. Contact owner. Tel: 089-615 9719. Email: nana1225@gmail.com

URGENT RENT/ SALE



House in Patong. Newly built 40sqm, near Sea Pearl project, Patong. 2 storeys, 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, fully furnished, 2 aircon, kitchen with hood, refrigerator, dining room, living room, hot water, cable TV and internet. Tel: 086-476 9612.

PRIVATE POOL VILLA AVAILABLE NOW

3 bedrooms, full furnished, located in secure area. Special price now. Tel: 089-472 9870, 086-471 5226. Email: dchaibut@gmail.com

HOUSE FOR RENT

In Kata. Perfect seaview. Tel: 081-968 5904.

BEACH HOUSE & CONDO

Beach house in Cape Panwa. 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, living room, kitchen and dining room for 12 people, outdoor relax room for sunset meetings. No pool. 45,000 baht per month. Separate condo with 1 bedroom, 1 living room and dining room, 1 bathroom, private porch. 15,000 baht per month. Tel: 085-471 7629 (English), 084-520 5013 (English & Thai). Email: per.benckert@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.phuketbeachliving.com

RENT ROOMS OR APARTMENT

Patong. Price: 9,000-15,000 baht per month, furnished, pool. Tel: 089-728 4005. Email: thamad17@yahoo.com

PRIVATE PATONG HOUSE



Large enclosed yard with waterfall, swim jet pool, very quiet, clean water, 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom, furnished. Must see! Tel: 087-882 1963 (English), 088-464 3835 (Thai). Email: benlee53@hotmail.com

3 BEDROOMS NEAR BANG TAO

Pruksa Ville, fully furnished. 13,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-795 6363. Email: vicky_grc@hotmail.com

7 BEDROOMS WITH GOLF VIEW

Large house with golf view in Anuphas Golf Ville. Quiet, private swimming pool, close to all shopping malls and international school. Call 081-271 3228 or email: info@procarpentering.com for more info.

CHALONG BEACHFRONT

Furnished, pool villa, 3 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2 lounges, cable TV, internet. 30,000 baht per month. Tel: 089-470 6104.

NEW FULLY FURNISHED HOUSE



2-storey house, 2 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 20,000 baht per month, quiet area. Ao Makham Bay, 4km from town, 2km to beach. Tel: 081-892 4311. For further details, please see our website at panwagreen.weebly.com

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Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

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- ▶ Thai national (able to read, write, speak fluent Thai)
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- ▶ Clear thinking in order to identify what makes a good news story
- ▶ Initiative and enthusiasm to track down a story
- ▶ Photography skills
- ▶ Able to manage own time effectively
- ▶ Knowledge of Burmese an advantage
- ▶ Driver's license

Good salary for the right candidate.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to Um@PhuketGazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, Koh Kaew
A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Ext.303 Fax: 076-615240

THAI STAFF WANTED

Bayshore Projects Co Ltd is looking for Thai staff that can work both in bar and front office (receptionist). Tel: 076-345670, 081-968 5963 (English). Send CV to manuela@bayshoreprojects.com

CHINESE SPEAKING STAFF

Chinese/Thai-to-English translators and sales people needed. Must have excellent spoken and written Chinese skills. Apply with CV and expected salary. Email: dreams holdings@yahoo.com

SALESMAN WANTED

We are selling a state-of-the-art pipe system for hot and cold water applications and for A/C systems. Qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree
- Able to communicate in English: speaking, reading and writing
- Energetic and enthusiastic with a positive attitude
- Highly motivated, disciplined and hard working
- Experience in working with architects for specifying products The work can be full time or freelance. Tel: 081-374 0494. Email: klaus.bauer@pimatec.com

ARCHITECT

Thai national wanted. Ability to use AutoCAD, Sketch-Up and 3D-Max is a must. Tel: 081-788 1639. Email: sec@phuketawnings.com

HOUSEKEEPER SURIN VILLA

Must speak English, 6 days a week, must have happy personality and like cats. Previous work experience in hotel or villa is an advantage. References needed. Tel: 083-103 1330.

ACCOUNTING BOOKKEEPER

Full time. Start immediately. Accounting degree or equivalent. Drivers License. Experience. Tel: 085-783 0141. Email: info@thailandcamp.com

STAFF WANTED

Receptionist, good written and spoken English is a must. Word and accounting experience is a plus. Must have a friendly outgoing personality. Salary: 12,000-20,000 baht depending on experience.

- Office admin, good computer skills, Excel, and accounting is required. Good written and spoken English is a must. 15,000-22,000 baht a month depending on experience.
- Office manager, must be proficient in Excel, written and spoken English. Prior experience required. Salary: 25,000+ baht monthly depending on experience. Please send your resume to smartbusinessphuket@gmail.com



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ON KATA BEACH



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Boathouse on Kata Beach and RE KÁ TA, Beach Club at Boathouse are now seeking the following positions:

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Engineering <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrician 	Kitchen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief Steward • Steward 	Boutique <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boutique & Cafe Attendant

Interested applicants, please e-mail full resume and a recent photograph to hroffice@boathousephuket.com

Boathouse
182 Kuktanode Road, Kata beach, Phuket 83100 Tel: 076 330 015
www.boathousephuket.com

HOUSEKEEPER

Young lady, good English, intelligent, cheerful. Top salary. Please contact Tiffany. Tel: 089-850 1622. Email: tcde sportes@gmail.com

GUEST SERVICE MANAGER

Mangosteen Resort & Ayurveda Spa requires a female guest services manager for Resort and Vacation Club. Duties will involve confirming guests' appointments upon arrival, liaising with sales team and resort staff. Outgoing personality & excellent communication skills in English a must. Experience in the Vacation Ownership Industry preferred. Excellent basic Salary plus commission. Tel: 076-289 399. Fax: 076-289389. Please contact: rm@mangosteen-phuket.com For further details, please see our website at www.mangosteen-phuket.com

WORK WANTED

Thai lady, speaks English, experienced, cook, maid, babysitter, can live in, looking for part-time job. Contact Taew. Tel: 081-084 2708.

MAID WANTED

Thai maid wanted for holiday villa in Surin. Live in or live out; must speak a little bit of English and have experience. Tel: 084-689 4658 (English), 081-693 1621 (Thai). Email: Kamalabeach@hotmail.com

ESTATE/ RENTAL MANAGER

Intira Villas is looking for a Thai person with a happy and positive attitude. Must be able to communicate in English and Thai, both in speaking and writing. Experience in management and rentals. Tel: 081-472 4925 (English). Please send CV and salary requirement. Email: jonas@intiravillas.com

ACCOUNTANT FOR REAL ESTATE

We are looking for an experienced accountant that can handle government officials and tax related issues. A high salary will be given. Tel: 076-341045. 081-459 0152 (English). Contact us at the number above or send your CV to info@phuket-condos-homes.com

FOOD STORE MANAGER

Food importer and distributor based in the south is seeking a branch manager. Ideal candidate has minimum 5 years experience in F&B industry and proven management skills. High salary and profit sharing scheme. Tel: 087-264 9695 (English). Email: eb@ebnetwork.it

Authorized Agents for Classified Advertising:

CHALONG

- ▶ **Julapan Stationery** (Chaofa East Rd) Tel: 076-282254
- ▶ **KL Mart** (Patak Rd, Chalong Circle) Tel: 076-280400
- ▶ **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Fisherman's Way Business Center, Chaofa East Rd) Tel: 076-282403

PATONG

- ▶ **Taurus Travel** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-344521-2
- ▶ **Khun Woody's Sandwich Shoppe** (Aroonsom Plaza) Tel: 076-290468
- ▶ **Deli Supermarket** (Rat-U-Thit 200 Pi Rd) Tel: 076-342275

PHUKET CITY

- ▶ **Earth Language Training Centre School** (Phang Nga Rd) Tel: 076-232398
- ▶ **Sin & Lee** (Thalang Rd) Tel: 076-258369
- ▶ **iTree complete printing service** (Tesco Lotus Phuket Town) bank zone Tel: 076-255425

CHERNG TALAY

- ▶ **Chaba Supermarket** (at the Laguna gateway) Tel: 076-325586

RAWAI

- ▶ **The Network property office** (Saiyuan Rd) Tel: 076-613173

KARON

- ▶ **EuroStyle Tailors** (Luang Por Chuan Rd) Tel: 076-396911

Phuket Gazette

The Phuket Gazette seeks to fill the following position:

GRAPHIC ARTIST 1 POSITION

- ▶ Graphic-design skills and knowledge of Adobe Illustrator, PageMaker, Photoshop required
- ▶ Freehand drawing and web-design skills a plus
- ▶ Responsible, hard-working, attention to detail
- ▶ Able to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines
- ▶ Good communication skills, team player
- ▶ Thai-English speaker

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV to Khun Anna (General Manager), by email, fax or post to:

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

79/94 Moo 4, Thepkasattri Rd, T. Koh Kaew, A. Muang Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555, ext 102 Fax: 076-615240 Email: anna@phuketgazette.net

PROMOTERS WANTED

Popular bar for young "Farangs" looking for dynamic people to do promotion. Residents and travellers welcome to apply. Tel: 081-958 5394 (English). Email: collinniemi@gmail.com

FRONT DESK STAFF - SAMUI

Plus WELLNESS MANAGER required by Detox resort. Tel: 077-602096. Send CV and photo to fasthealing@yahoo.com

ITALIAN SALES CONSULTANT

Experienced Italian sales representative is needed for Real Estate. Good command of English and Italian are required. Highest commission on the island awaits the right candidate. T81-968 5963. Send CV to c@bayshoreprojects.com

HOTEL RECEPTIONIST WANTED

Thai citizen, aged 21-40, basic computer skills, good spoken English. Salary is 12,000 baht + big commissions on sales. Tel: 076-333079. 080-698 8335, 082-417 9299. Email: iphone.dez@gmail.com

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 - Cleaning lady
- Tel: 084-847 0732. Email: intlicense@yahoo.com

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Small dynamic real estate agency based in Chalong seeking Thai female staff. Good command of both spoken and written English. Computer literacy. start immediately. Tel: 086-940 2266. Email your resume to sales@18excelsior-property.com For further details, please see our website at 18excelsior-property.com

MAINTENANCE MANAGER NEEDED

Experienced maintenance/facilities manager is sought for a villa on the west coast. Send CV. Email: gdtreg@yahoo.ca

HOUSEKEEPER WANTED

Thai trainee housekeeper, English speaking, start from 10,000 baht, nice increase and work place. Tel: 081-787 9774. Email: phukettreasure@gmail.com

GIGONG / TAICHI TEACHER

To facilitate classes in Kata. Tel: 086-281 9311. Email: bao200@gmail.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE OFFICER

We are looking for a customer service officer. Female between 20-35, Thai nationality only. Tel: 082-007 0700 (Thai). Fax: 076-367212. Email: info@phukettravel.co.th For further details, please see www.phukettravel.co.th/recruitment.html

CUSTOMER RELATIONS @ RESORT

Health Resort Customer Relations & Sales Rep. Fluent English speaker & experience required. (Good salary & benefits). Tel: 085-783 0141. Email: info@thailandcamp.com

MARKETING MANAGER

Thai, age above 30 years, related experience. Salary: 30,000 baht + commission. Tel: 087-026 1362. Fax: 076-381717. Email: chalongmarket@hotmail.com Please send email, or call for info.

ACCOUNTANT NEEDED

Japanese wedding company Sa-mer Wedding at Boat Lagoon. is seeking an experienced accountant. Qualification: over 3 years experience in accounts. Good command of spoken and written English. Good salary based on experience. Please contact us by email: fumiko@sa-mer.com

VILLA MANAGER

Property Management Company based in Rawai is seeking Villa Manager. Ideal candidate has minimum 3/5 years experience in same position and proven management skills. The position is open for foreigner. Perfect is required English spoken and written. Additional languages will be considered as a plus. Tel: 076-383435. Email: eb@ebnetwork.it

SECRETARY/ ACCOUNTANT WANTED

Thai secretary wanted for Swedish Siam Co LTD, located at Surin beach. Must speak and write English. Basic windows office skills. Good if you have driver's licence. Salary from 15,000/m. Tel: 084-6894658 (English), 087-290 1019 (Thai). Email: Malin@vertigophuket.com For further details, please see our website at www.vertigophuket.com

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- ▶ Experience in: PHP, asp, asp.net, OOP, Java Script, HTML5, CSS, JSON, AJAX, JQuery
- ▶ Expert in use of database tools and in SQL command (MS-SQL, MySQL)
- ▶ Experience in php frameworks would be a plus
- ▶ Ability in spoken and written English
- ▶ Ability to work with team
- ▶ Ability to work under pressure and time constraints

Good salary for the right candidate.

Qualified candidates are invited to send a CV by email to big@phuketgazette.net

The Phuket Gazette Co Ltd

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A. Muang, Phuket 83000
Tel: 076-273555 Ext. 303 Fax: 076-615240

DIVE AND SURF SHOP

Needs Thai female staff with basic English skills. Tel: 089-874 9147.

YACHT DELIVERY CREW WANTED

From Miri / North Borneo to Phuket in April / May; 19m MY. Only licensed and experienced crew. please! Tel: +60-14-257 5485. Email: boatjob1234@gmail.com

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We are looking for young and energetic sales & admin staff. 20 to 25 years old. Good computer skills & English command a must. Thai national only. Call for an appointment now! Tel: 076-325419, 085-619 0380 (English & Thai), 081-400 4678 (English & Thai). Email: orientalsamui@gmail.com For further details, please see our website at www.oriental-living.net

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Vacancies: coffee shop assistant manager, baristas, waiters, bar assistants, experience and English. Tel: 086-276 4914.

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in charge of the two restaurants / two bars - continuously working on further enhancing the service experience for our guests via team training programs and improved service procedures

- 3 - 5 years experience in equivalent property/position
- fluent in English language
- leader personality, creative with new product innovations
- Thai National

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Bar & Restaurant Equipment

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Circuit integrity cross-checked by UL, SafeAsia and iFARD every four months. Documentation available. Certified by Thai OOC within two weeks of import. Can be blarfed into any properly wired restaurant kitchen in Thailand. Purchased new in Dijon, Nov 2010, for 82,000 baht; selling now for just 55,000 baht. Three-pole snard beans (4) with lithium backing plates. Gooze and Himmelman pork whistles, milled and graded in July last year. Insured through November this year (2013). Happy to demonstrate for serious buyers at Le Montage, Rawai, any night except Mondays (restaurant closed).

Contact Jack Martin for pics and documentation.
Tel or SMS: 081-207 4471.
Email: jackmartin3@gmx.com

Bulletins

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The Phuket International Women's Club is a volunteer organization raising funds for educational scholarships. We rely on the goodwill of donors and sponsors – small and large. If you would like to put something back into the community in which you live, contact us to find out more about giving a prize or being a sponsor. Contact Carol. Please call 087-417 8860 or contact Sue. Tel: 087-277 6948. For more information please email us at info@phuketiw.com

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HOTEL BEACHFRONT IN PATONG FOR RENT



The best location on Patong Beach. There are 16 rooms, seaview and fully furnished, very good occupancy rates. Contact Mark. Tel: 080-141 6040.

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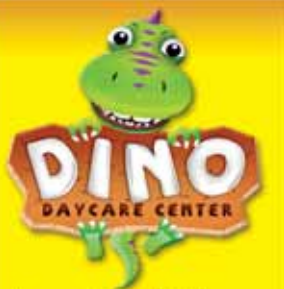
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Miscellaneous For Sale

BISS FLAPPER

Circuit integrity cross-checked by UL, SafeAsia and iFARD every four months. Documentation available. Certified by Thai OOC within two weeks of import. Can be blarfed into any properly wired restaurant kitchen in Thailand. Purchased new in Dijon, Nov 2010, for 82,000 baht; selling now for just 55,000 baht. Three-pole snard beans (4) with lithium backing plates. Gooze and Himmelman pork whistles, milled and graded in July last year. Insured through November this year (2013). Happy to demonstrate for serious buyers at Le Montage, Rawai, any night except Mondays (restaurant closed).

Contact Jack Martin for pics and documentation.
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Email: jackmartin3@gmx.com

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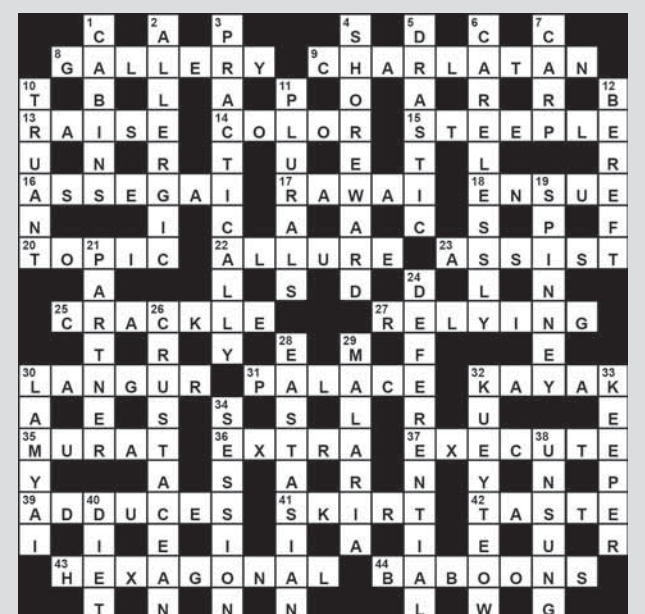
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SOLUTION TO THIS WEEK'S**Cryptic Crossword****COFFEE break**

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From left: Jarongdet Tipayamontri, chief concierge Holiday Inn Bangkok Sukhumvit 22; Chaba Kampha, chief concierge The Mandarin Oriental Bangkok; Kritsananan Araxbhojchong, chief concierge Grand Hyatt Erawan Bangkok.



From left: Praewprawlin Inchomchuen, IMAGE asia; Dr Kosol Taengutai, vice-mayor of Phuket Municipality; Kim Steppe, GM of Blue Elephant; Chanchai Duangjit, director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Phuket office; and Jantana Jaikwang, assistant sales manager of *Phuket Gazette*.

Chang-SAT ITF Pro Circuit 2013 from April 20 to April 27



Craig Johns, director of Thanyapura Sports Academy congratulated Luxsika Kumkhum (left) the winner of the first week of Chang-SAT ITF Pro Circuit 2013 and Lisa Whybourne (right), runner up.

Lucky License plate Auction time!



Phuket's 8th annual Lucky License plate auction earned over 26 million baht.

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The octopus, the only species known to mimic other marine creatures, prepares to escape.



In a blur of motion the creature contracts and twists – transforming.



Completely changed, the mimic octopus glides across the sand as a venomous sole.

Diving

By Isaac Stone Simonelli

TURN your back on the reef. This isn't an orientation dive to test your ability to get back to the corals. Turn your back on the safety of the gorgonian sea fans, staghorn corals and saffron-colored clam, and start kicking, be brave.

Following the lead of Vince Moy from Kiwidiver, we stomp across the sand of Kata Beach far from the northern tip, where the coral reef is located. The pictures on his camera from previous visits are proof enough that there are treasures out on the submerged sand beds.

With thousands of dives as a professional, and hundreds on Kata Beach, Vince, in his free time, has strayed from the reef, and is now regularly finding and photographing species of sea horse, pipehorse and countless other marine creatures that are leaving even some experts scratching their heads in attempts to identify them. These discoveries aren't from some tiny isolated island or difficult to access pinnacle of the coast of Borneo, they can be found in one of the easiest dive spots to access on an island with an international airport and a developed mass tourist market.

I, like many divers, have already accepted that there is the possibility of interesting creatures living out in the underwater deserts, those areas devoid of coral and even grass beds. However, I assumed it was mostly herds of goat fish, the occasional flat fish and of course some blue spotted rays.

In my mind, this landscape would no doubt be speckled with miniature reefs, a small coral head here, a discarded tyre offering cover to a eel there, but just isolated bits and pieces of what

BE BRAVE!

Rewards for audaciously parting with the reef and heading for the sand come in many forms



The rare mimic octopus, first discovered in 1998, reaches for the camera.

could be found in abundance on the coral reefs themselves.

On our backs, we fin out to a depth that we can safely descend below any potential boat traffic, flash an okay sign and head for the bottom. Kicking across the sand, the minutes seem to drag out as we head towards the blue horizon. Vince's eyes, already fine tuned

to the sparse sand-scape, see potential, for me, the sudden clarity in the water allowing the light to play across the white sand is entertainment enough.

A longtail boat passes overhead with a roar, and then there is the welcome 'ting, ting, ting' of a tank being tapped. Vince points to the sand below me, and there, clinging to a broken branch of marine vegetation is a three spotted sea horse. Scanning the area its hard to imagine how this shy little

creature ended out in the 'open water' with only two centimeters of tiny twig to hold onto, but it seemed content nonetheless.

Circling back around we drift over a sparse underwater grass bed, a patch no bigger than a one room apartment. Blending in as best they can with tentacles lifted, flowing back and forth with the sea grass are a handful of small cuttlefish.

Vince begins to scour the grass bed. Specks of 'sponge' turn out to be tiny crabs, and then there,



An abundance of pipehorses can be found in the grasses and out across the sands of Kata Beach. Photos: Kiwidiver

hanging on a blade of grass, is what we are searching for – a pygmy pipehorse. This tiny relative of the seahorse we spotted earlier is only one of what appears to be several species in the Kata Beach area. Dwarfed by even the girth of a pencil, the tiny pipehorse is intricately camouflaged with wisps of fleshy 'grass' and texture distorting the lines of its body.

After spotting one more of these little treasures, Vince signals that its time to sweep back out onto the sand. Away from even the sea grass we pause over a fingered dragonet, an oddly formed and strangely finned fish.

With such a successful dive already logged and plenty of air left in our tanks we continue to sift through the sand for more treasures perhaps first-time encounters with new species of nudibranchs.

Not far away, we find something that 'shouldn't' be out here. Peeking out of the sand as a slender dark black blob is something completely different – a mimic octopus.

Known to reside in the tropical seas of Southeast Asia, this stunning creature wasn't discovered until 1998 off Sulawesi, then in 2010 it was confirmed to be in the Great Barrier Reef. However, it is most often found in the nutrient-rich estuarine bays of Indonesia and Malaysia – not playing in the waters of Phuket – though rumors have been circulating for several years.

Brown and white striped, the rare octopus begins a show. Holding a pair of tentacles high, it mimics a crab, before changing its mind and transforming into something completely different. The mimic octopus is known to portray itself as a variety of marine animals: sea snakes, lion fish, venomous sole, sea anemones and even jellyfish.

All octopus species are highly intelligent and can change the color and texture of their skin for camouflage, but until the mimic octopus was discovered, none had been observed mimicking the shape and behaviors of other marine animals.

Curious, the octopus reaches out for the camera seeming to crave the tactile contact, as if touching the camera might give it a better sense of how to mold itself.

Then in a frenzied flash of movement the octopus no longer resembles an octopus in any way. Flat and wide, it effortlessly transforms into a sole fluttering across the barren sandy landscape.

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WHAT'S ON in Phuket

April 20-May 4, 7am to 6pm: Chang-SAT ITF Pro Circuit 2013 at Thanyapura Sports & Leisure Club

The ITF Women's Circuit is a series of professional tennis tournaments run by the International Tennis Federation for female professional tennis players. The ITF professional tennis tournament, with prize money of USD\$25,000, is a high standard tournament which will allow spectators to watch top female athletes from many countries compete. This event is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTv and the 'Phuket Today' show. For more information please email: virapol.c@thanyapura.com

May 5, Coronation Day

Coronation Day commemorates the accession to the throne of HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej on May 5, 1950.

May 5, 6pm to 2am: Russian Easter at Two Chefs, Kata Center

Two Chefs are celebrating the Russian Easter. We are setting up a big buffet with Russian food. For example: Borscht, Plov, Potato Vareniki and so much more. The price is only 495 baht and there are no extra charges. There is going to be live music, great drinks and a lot of food, so see you there. For more information or to make a reservation please visit: twochefs.com.

May 6, Substitution for Coronation Day (Public Holiday)

May 10, 6 to 8pm: Tri Nations Sundowners at The Pullman

AMCHAM's Greater Phuket Chapter, together with the local membership of AustCham and the BBAP (British Business Association Phuket) will stage a joint social networking event at



Phuket Health & Fitness Festival May 18-19 2013

the new Pullman Arcadia Resort at Naithon Beach. The tribes have merged and every nationality is invited to join for sundowners to meet old friends and make new ones. Mark Friday, May 10th on your calendar, with drinks starting from 6pm and running through til 8pm at the hotel's C Bar. Admission is 200 baht per person and includes two free drinks and snacks. A cash bar will also be available. To sign up for this event, please visit: www.amchamthailand.com or contact Sheree by email: sheree@amchamthailand.com, telephone 02-254 1041, ext 212.

May 10, 7 to 11pm: Indian Curry Buffet at the Navrang Mahal in Karon Sea Sands Resort

All you can eat, authentic Indian curry buffet at 449 baht net per person. Come enjoy our cold Mango and Strawberry Lassi with our delicious Mutton Vindaloo, Dal Makhani, Bombay Aloo, Mutter Paneer, Butter Chicken, mouth-watering Chicken Tikka, Samosas, freshly baked Naans and more. For reservations contact Jaspal Singh on: +66-76-286464.

May 16, 11:30am to 2pm: Phuket International Women's

Club monthly lunch

Our lunch in May will be at Centara Grand Beach Resort (between Karon and Patong). All are welcome but prior registration is essential. Members 500 baht, guests 650 baht. For more information contact info@phuketiw.com

May 18 19, 7:30am to 6pm: 2nd Phuket Health & Fitness Festival 2013

The second Phuket Health & Fitness Festival is organized by the Rawai-Nai Harn Group and features various events and activities, including yoga classes, lectures on well-being, raw food cooking classes, zumba, a boot camp plus the ultimate SUP challenge. Visit our website for details. Tickets for all activities are only 500 baht per person and can be purchased at Atmanjai, Mangosteen or the Serenity Resort. The Rawai-Nai Harn Health & Fitness Festival is sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTv and 'Phuket Today' show. For more information email Michael Massey: michael@atmanjai.com or visit rawainaiharn.com

May 24, Visakha Bucha Day

Visakha Bucha Day is observed on the day of the full moon

during the 6th lunar month, which usually falls in May or early June. It is a day to commemorate three important incidents: the birth, the enlightenment and the passing away of the Buddha.

June 9, 4:30am to 12pm: 8th Laguna Phuket International Marathon at Laguna Grove, Laguna Phuket

Thousands of runners from around the world will "Run Paradise" in this, the eighth edition of the Laguna Phuket International Marathon to re-affirm its status as Asia's most

popular family-friendly destination marathon. In addition to the full 42km marathon there's a 21.1km half marathon and 10.5km run. Plus families catered for with the 91.5FM 5km community walk and 2km children's race. "Run Paradise" is an apt description, with runners of all ages and abilities on a mainly flat course that takes in rubber and pineapple plantations, beach views, local villages and the tropical lagoons of Laguna Phuket – all in a family-friendly carnival atmosphere. For more information visit phuketmarathon.com

June 20, 11:30am to 2pm: Phuket International Women's Club monthly lunch

The June lunch will be held at 2 Chefs Bistro in Karon. All are welcome but registration is essential. Members 500 baht, guests 650 baht. For more information, please contact: info@phuketiw.com.

July 6-7, 10am to 8pm: Phuket Airshow & Family Picnic at Phuket Airpark

Two full days of entertainment for local area charities. Support this great non-profit event by becoming a sponsor, volunteer, or vendor. For more details please visit navyleaguephuket.org.

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Don't be bashful: introduce yourself to the group at the big table, and ask away. You might even find an iPad/iPhone, Android or Mac guru, if you're lucky.

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Phuket Today is a 30-minute lifestyle show about Phuket. The show features resorts, villas, restaurants, yachts, private aircraft, nightlife, sports, leisure activities and events. Produced by PGTv, the television arm of the Phuket Gazette, the show is designed to promote Phuket to tourists and the international community resident in Thailand.

Catch the show at these times

TrueVisions HD Channel 99	Phuket Cable Company (PC)
8 shows a week - MCOT World	Covers all Phuket.
Monday: 05:10am	Channel 1 - 19 shows a week
Tuesday: 11:10pm	Monday - Friday: 10:30am, 6:00pm, 9:00pm.
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Friday: 04:10am & 07:10pm	
Saturday: 01:10pm	
Sunday: 06:10pm	

True Freeview Channel 58	Rawai Cable
8 shows a week - MCOT World	Covers Rawai, Chalong, Kata, Karon.
Monday: 05:10am	Channel 1 - 28 shows a week
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Online: www.phuketgazette.net/tv | www.youtube.com/PGTVPhuket
And in 4,600 hotel rooms around the island, international hospitals and Phuket Immigration Office.

The stork and the snail

By Patrick Campbell

AS WE all know to our cost, snails are the gardener's bane. Today's subject, however, is not about the common or garden variety creature that hides in the day and slides and slithers around at night to devour your seedlings, but another, more exotic species. Perhaps it merits a less disparaging mention in dispatches.

The species in question is the golden apple snail (*Pomacea canaliculata*), one of the largest freshwater molluscs in the world. Maybe beautiful is the wrong epithet to use for a snail, but in truth, it *is* rather special. Usually bright golden-yellow, but also almost any other color including pink or purple and with or without dark bands. Up to 15 centimeters across, the snail inhabits watery abodes, and if you are a Thai rice farmer, you may have mixed feelings about this gargantuan creature, because it has shown itself capable of climbing out of its natural element and gorging on tender rice shoots. On the other hand, if you are a gourmet, you may well enjoy a repast of these very unusual "escargots".

So too the Asian openbill stork. This large bird, in common with two North American birds, the snail kite and a rail-like wader called the limpkin, feeds almost exclusively on the golden apple snail. This mollusc's relatively recent arrival in Thailand is linked to its introduction to Taiwan in the 1980s, where it was apparently intended both as a protein-rich addition to the diet of poor farmers, and a new gustatory delight. In the way of these things, this intrepid snail, which has both gills like a fish, lungs for normal aspiration, and an *operculum* – a film which closes the shell's opening and enables it to survive in drought conditions – migrated to the rest of South East Asia

and homed in on the lush paddy fields of central Thailand.

The Asian openbill stork, which appears to have a sixth sense in regard to the existence of this special food source, has detected this expansionist pattern and has followed the roving of these succulent morsels. Indeed, a recent sighting of a huge mustering of these birds in South Phuket, estimated to number between five and six hundred, offers at least circumstantial evidence of the golden apple snail's residency here. I myself saw a huge drift of storks soaring and circling on thermals some days ago, without my being aware of precisely what kind of bird they were. A friend who had seen hundreds of large grayish-white birds with glossy black wings patrolling a patch of lake and swamp inland from Rawai Beach, also asked me about them. A large flock had also been sighted by bird-watchers, on December 17, foraging on low-lying, boggy land near Ya Nui beach.

Initially unsure of their identity, I decided to consult an ornithologist who is a keen and expert observer of Thailand's birdlife. Derek Evans promptly wrote back,

saying that he had seen the storks in various locations, and quoted another authority, Dr PD Round, who offered confirmation of Derek's view that the bird in question was indeed the Asian openbill stork (*Anastomus oscitans*). He noted that they are now "spreading throughout Thailand

from [their] former heartland in the lower central plains around Bangkok, encouraged by the spread of irrigation for rice multi-cropping", and added significantly, "in tandem with the spread of the golden apple snail".

Paradoxically, there are hardly any paddy fields in Phuket, so the snail threat



The eggs of the golden apple snail are quite beautiful. Photo: By Dr Raju Kasambe



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: The openbill storks being spotted around Phuket, south of their normal habitat, could be partly due to the introduction of the golden apple snail. Photo: K Hari Krishnan

to rice farmers is minimal. But the few remaining areas of marsh are disappearing fast, including the wetland near Ya Nui beach. At this very moment, this precious habitat is being destroyed, as "developers" tip rubbish on the lush, bog-land vegetation in an attempt to prepare the site for – yes you've guessed it – yet another concrete jungle.

One can only conjecture *how* the snails have arrived here – if indeed they have. Perhaps the snail's eggs, which are laid in sticky clumps out of the water to avoid predators such as newts and frogs, may have been transported on the legs and feet of fellow waders such as herons or egrets, even conceivably in their innards.

More extravagantly, they may have arrived here as a consequence of the pet fish trade, for these monster snails are sometimes found, along with ornamental fish, in aquarium tanks, where they are useful disposers of algae. Thence to fish ponds and beyond is

no great leap. Anecdotally, my partner swears her brother used to catch these creatures as a boy in Trang (on the mainland south of Phuket) where they were much prized as a delicacy, and according to local lore, had hallucinogenic properties. She added that they had vanished years ago. Unsurprising....

Coincidentally and in the view of specialist Dr David R. Wells, the presence of these storks may be part of a wider pattern, "a more general expansionist trend among South East Asian large, inland water birds over recent years... Black-winged Stilts, breeding populations of Little and Cattle Egrets... the consequence of as yet unidentified cultural and socio/economic changes... that deserve urgent investigation."

Maybe the golden apple snail deserves to be part of this important and ongoing saga. My pious hope is that the snail is already here – and here to stay.



The golden apple snail is the bane of many a Thai rice farmer. Photo IIRI Images



The golden apple snail is a delicacy sought after by both bird and man. Photo: Kenpei

Dr Achara Pandaeng

DR ACHARA Pandaeng strides into Promjai Dental Clinic in Patong with the confidence of a professional woman on top of her game.

She stops briefly to reassure, in perfect English, a worried looking patient awaiting treatment, pokes her head into the treatment room to greet her partner at work and then chats to the cleaner whose welfare is obviously of concern to her – all within the space of three minutes.

Dynamic, active and multi-tasking are all words that can easily describe Dr Achara. It's not hard to see why; she manages three dental clinics simultaneously – two in Patong and one in the up-and-coming Sukhumvit Soi Tong Lor in Bangkok.

But as the interview progresses, we learn that there's more to the vivacious Dr Achara than just being a well-known dentist, a successful businesswoman and a dedicated Rotarian.

A woman of some determination, Dr Achara had the misfortune to open her second clinic in Patong just two months before the tsunami. "I had just invested a lot of money in the clinic and the loss of business sent me whirling into deep depression," she recalls.

"The valuable lesson I learned was to rely on my own strength. I did what I had to do and even opened another clinic in Patong."

THAI gallery

By Nanthapa Pengkasem

Dr Achara or "Mor Oi" as she's known to her patients, has taken a somewhat peculiar professional route, she has previously worked as flight attendant and served as a commander in the navy. All this before she formed a business partnership and opened what was to become one of the most trusted dental clinics in Bangkok.

Dr Achara graduated from Chulalongkorn University with a degree in Dentistry and also holds a master's in business administration. After a short career as flight attendant, Dr Achara followed in the footsteps of her father, then an Admiral, and joined the Royal Thai Navy. It was a decision she never regretted.

"Working for ten years in the navy was an experience that has shaped me as a person up to this day," she says thoughtfully.

"Not many people understand the mentality of those responsible for national security, which is totally different from the civilian's way of thinking. Effectively, we are just looking after our lot, but the people over there have a larger concern. For one thing, they know

how to look after their own people. It's one large network of support systems while business is profit-driven and hardly people-oriented."

She says the farsightedness of the navy and its long-term and systematic thinking, has stood her in good stead when she opened her first clinic in Bangkok, 22 years ago.

As a successful businesswoman in her own right, Dr Achara still practices what the navy has taught her. As an active member of the Srapathum sector of Rotary in Bangkok, Dr Achara tirelessly works for a good cause. Together with other Rotarians, Dr Achara helped initiate the much-lauded mobile dental clinics. In operation since 2010, these clinics, comprised of fully-equipped vans and operated by volunteer dentists from Mahidol University (sometimes Dr Achara herself chips in), go out to rural schools in central Thai provinces six times a year.

"Everyone should sacrifice their time and expertise for a good cause. We owe it to our society."

Dr Achara plans to retire in five years but for the moment she's enjoying every minute of her work, be it running the clinics or initiating some other Rotarian project on a grass-roots level. Despite her plans to wind down her working-life, it seems with such a varied and fulfilling career, she's a long way from retiring yet.



About Thai Gallery

The individuals profiled in "Thai Gallery" are chosen on the basis of their contributions to Phuket as an international community, and, often, for having made those contributions through successful social and/or working relationships with foreigners. This implies some foreign language skills and an interest in interacting with different cultures. They are people who in our experience help make the lives of expats far more enjoyable here than might be the case without them.

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Orchids are a staple of any Phuket nursery (above), as are potted bougainvilleas, right . Photos: Andrea Williams and redpolkadot



Nursery education

WITH THE wet season looming, now is a good time to put the spotlight on Phuket's plant nurseries, or what North Americans refer to as garden centers. After all, we will doubtless be paying them a visit or two in the near future, so let's suspend our A to Z of plants for a moment.

First the good points: Phuket has a large number of these nurseries, many dotted along the main roads such as Chao Fa East and West that link the old town to the southern littoral of the island. Secondly, these centers have a good range of plants, usually sensibly arranged according to species. There are the inevitable colorful annuals such as African marigolds or globe amaranths, perennials such as the fashionable lavender colored *ruellia*, and of course ever-popular shrubs such as potted multi-hued *bougainvilleas*, *wrightia*, jasmines, *plumerias* and hibiscus.

Under the green or black awnings one will usually find a range of shade-loving plants; including foliage plants such as *algaonema*, *dieffenbachias*, *philodendrons*, *anthuriums* and *neoregelias*. Right now many nurseries are decorated with hanging pots of colorful busy lizzies, white *mandevillas*,



Gardening
By Patrick Campbell

portulacas and even petunias. The customer service is invariably friendly and basic information about a plant's requirements is usually forthcoming – on request. Moreover, the plants on display are normally healthy and well-cared for.

I do however, confess to having some reservations about Phuket's nurseries. Sometimes the proprietor is not there and has left the place to one or more immigrant assistants who can't sell you anything anyway. A wasted journey.

More importantly, there is in my experience, little or no systematic labeling of plants and still less in the way of written cultural information. Alright, if we have any sense we go on our purchasing missions armed with books containing photographs and even Thai names. But more, much more, could be

done to help the would-be buyer. Even basic stuff on plastic notices attached to the relevant group of plants would help; whether they are acid or alkaline loving; whether they prefer a position in full sun, or semi-shade; how often they need fertilizer; what size they can be expected to achieve and so on.

Pricing is, in my humble opin-

twelve inch pot.

It is also difficult to bargain or to negotiate a discount when buying a number of plants. I know of only one nursery woman who consistently drops her prices for bulk buying on request and her prices are mostly lower than average already.

Also, why be so secretive about prices? A nursery on Chao Fa West, now long since gone, used to have massive signs advertising its wares; its small plants were variously priced at five, seven and ten baht. Of course, it did a roaring trade.

Few nurseries sell fertilizer and even fewer sell specialist food with different amounts of nitrogen, phosphate and potassium. Fewer still sell packeted seed and even more surprisingly, trees. Admittedly most centers do sell white bags of compost and many have piles of coconut fiber, which is useful for mixing with top soil or employing as a mulch. Top soil however, is very difficult to ob-

tain. You might do better to seek out a new building site and ask the back-hoe operator to dump a load in your truck. It has been done.

Two final points. Old established nurseries are often better than the new kids on the block. They are far more likely to have mature, well established shrubs for sale and probably at a better price. They may well have a business arrangement with resorts or hotels which means that mark-ups are likely to be less punitive.

Be careful not to buy plants that are too pot-bound or that may have thrust a long tap-root into the soil below the container. Most likely it will be chopped off when the plant is sold. On the other hand, bushy roots that have spread through the holes below the base of the pot indicate healthy growth. Just use great care when removing the plant. It is all too easy to damage the fragile root system, so cut away the entangled plastic and gently ease the root from its container.

If you have a question or a garden that you would like featured, you can email me anytime at: drpaccampbell@gmail.com.



Phalaenopsis Amabilis. Photo: Dionisius Purba

ion, on the high side. After all, plants grow all the time and what sells at 25 baht in a small five inch pot becomes, in a matter of weeks, a 50 baht specimen in a larger container. Expect to pay 150 baht for a shrub in a ten or

Tip of the week

Pampering your palms

PALMS are low-maintenance – ideal for the gardener who doesn't want to get his hands dirty. Once established, most will require little attention. But old fronds do start to go yellow or brown and finally die. When this happens they look scruffy and unsightly because they tend to stay limply attached to the tree.

With some varieties there is a simple solution. With yellow cane (*dypsis lutescens*) or sealing wax palms (*cyrtostachys*

renda), just pull sharply on the yellowing frond and it should come away from the trunk, together with the sheath..

In the case of other palms, you will need to cut off the old part close to the trunk with a sharp knife or hatchet: for example with palmyras (*borassus*), coconuts (*cocos nucifera*), foxtails (*wodyetia*) or travelers palms (*ravanala*). Sometimes it is necessary to remove lower fronds to improve the shape of the tree – as with the blue-gray bismarck palm (*bismarckia*).



Sealing wax palm. Photo: Ahmad Fuad Morad

Dog of the week

WHEN Sugar was found about 3 months ago, she was weak, dirty, full of parasites, suffered anemia and was in danger of being attacked by larger dogs.

After a few days back at Doggie Heaven sanctuary for a month of rest, a swanky haircut, antibiotics treatment and many more baths, she is now a different girl.

Sugar is now healthy and has a sweet and easy-going temperament. She loves going out for a walk and gets along very well with other dogs.

If you would like to adopt Sugar or come to Doggie Heaven and meet the other dogs that are



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Let's lunch at La Moon

By Chris Hudon

ON THE way to Surin Beach, as you pass through Cherg Talay, if you're feeling a bit hungry you should make a stop at La Moon restaurant.

La Moon's owner 'Khun Ging' is sitting with some local Thai families, sharing a communal meal and exchanging the latest family news when we arrive.

Ever the perfect hostess, Khun Ging soon joins us and explains why she chose the menu and location of 'La Moon'.

"The restaurant is off a main road, close to the Laguna complex and I live nearby," she says. "I own an apartment building called Siwana Place and I often encountered tenants who would complain that there weren't enough Western restaurants in the [Cherg Talay] area."

Seeing the opportunity to fill a void in the market, Khun Ging sprang into action, constructing what has become La Moon restaurant in less than a year and serving her first guests in October of 2012.

The food here is affordable and includes most traditional Thai staples such as *Pad Thai* and *Ga Prow*, some Isaan food and a variety of Thai/Western fusion dishes.

We decide to try a variety of dishes today and our meal begins with a crisp rocket salad, hydroponically grown in the area, garnished with pine nuts, cheese and crunchy carrot.

A great start, and the meal moved along with an interesting fusion dish, Spaghetti *Pad Key Mao* or in English, 'drunken stir fried spaghetti', which was delectable.

This spicy dish was named for its restorative powers and the fact that it is easily prepared when drunk. Given the lively night scene here (the restaurant also has a bar and stage) this dish may be one of the most popular.

The main course was mouth watering Australian beef that we devoured shortly upon its arrival. Delicious.

The name La Moon, though it sounds deceptively French to some, is actually

derived from a phrase in ancient Thai: 'hom lamoon' which translates roughly as 'sweet aroma'.

The restaurant employs a staff of around 10 people including a talented cook who studied in Italy. There is a house band on Saturdays during the high season though the restaurant frequently holds karaoke-style parties to take advantage of its professional audio equipment in the low season.

La Moon is located on Cherg Talay Road on the way from Laguna to the airport. Open from 11am to 11pm daily, happy hours are from 3-8pm and feature a buy one get one free promotion on glasses of wine. For more information contact tel: 076-615725 or email: info@lamoonthuket.com



MAMA MIA: The Italian-trained chef arrives with the steak.



SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS: Khun Ging welcomes guests on arrival (above) with a plate of hydroponic rocket salad. The spicy Pat Key Mao (below). Photos: Steven Layne



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New keyboard for thumb-typing

TYPING on today's mobile phones and tablets is needlessly slow. One limitation is that the QWERTY layout is ill-suited for tablets and other touchscreen devices when typing with the thumbs. In an attempt to solve this problem, researchers from the Max Planck Institute for Informatics have created a new keyboard, called KALQ, that enables faster thumb-typing on touchscreen devices.

A user study confirmed that, after a short amount of practice, users could type 34% faster than they could with a QWERTY layout.

Computational optimization techniques, in conjunction with a model of thumb movement, were used to search among millions of potential layouts before identifying one that yields superior performance.

Two-thumb typing is ergonomically very different from typing on a physical keyboard. It has been established that normal users using a QWERTY keyboard layout on a touchscreen device are limited to typing at a rate of around 20 words per minute, which is slow compared to the rates achieved on physical keyboards.

The researchers set out to create an alternative to QWERTY that offers substantial performance advantages for users.

The researchers from the Max Planck Institute and colleagues from the University of St Andrews and Montana Tech quickly realized that slight changes to the layout, like exchanging a few keys, would not be sufficient for a significant improvement.

Words like "on, see, you, read, dear, immune, based", frequently used in texts, have to be typed on a split-QWERTY layout with a single thumb only, making the typing burdensome. This initiated the process to develop a layout for two-thumb text entry with the goal of improving typing performance and minimizing the strain for the thumbs.

"The key to optimizing a keyboard for two thumbs is to minimize long sequences with a single thumb. We also want to place frequently used letters centrally close to each other. Experienced typists move their thumbs simultaneously: While one is typing, the other is approaching its next target. We derived a predictive model of this behavior for the optimization

method," said key researcher Antti Oulasvirta.

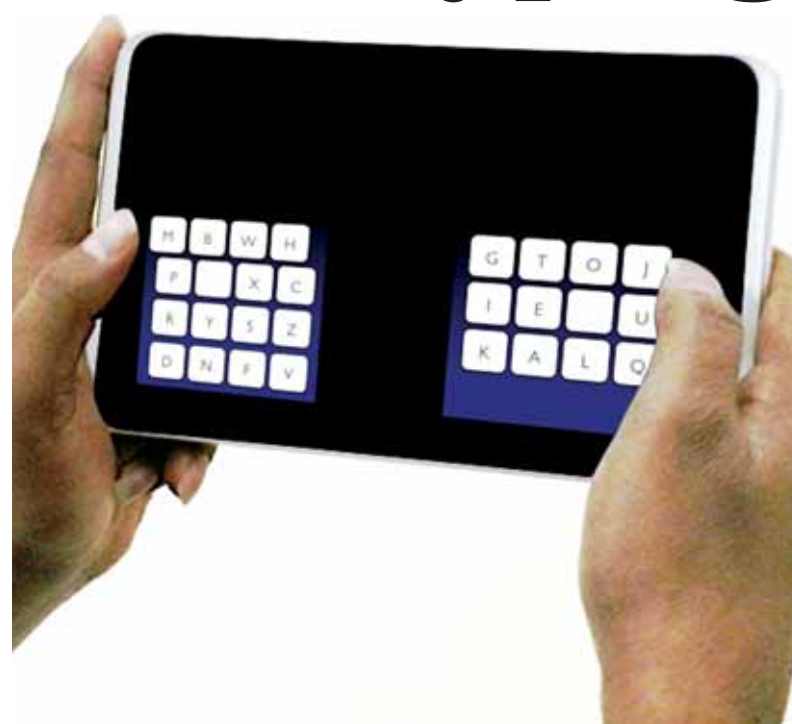
In the new keyboard KALQ, all vowels, with the exception of the letter 'y', are placed in the area for the right thumb, whereas the left thumb gets assigned more keys. To fully benefit from this layout, the users were trained to move their thumbs simultaneously. While one thumb is typing, the other one can move to its next target.

Per Ola Kristensson says "The legacy of QWERTY has trapped users with suboptimal text entry interfaces on mobile devices.

However, before abandoning QWERTY, users rightfully demand a compelling alternative. We believe KALQ provides a large enough performance improvement to incentivize users to switch and benefit from faster and more comfortable typing."

Finally, the authors developed probabilistic error correction methods that took into account how thumbs move and also statistical knowledge about the texts users type.

Their error correction method enabled trained users to type more quickly while retaining an accept-



The researchers set out to create an alternative to QWERTY that offers substantial performance advantages for users. Photo: Max Planck institute

able level of errors.

With these improvements, users were able to reach 37 words per minute, which is the best ever reported for two-thumb typing on touchscreen devices, significantly more than the 20 words on a

split QWERTY that regular users can achieve. — *Phuket Gazette*

KALQ will be made available as a free app for Android. For more information, visit <http://www.mpi-inf.mpg.de/~oantti/KALQ/>

Facebook Home zeros in on Android phones



The popular Facebook "Like".



The Android logo.

FACEBOOK has released its latest 'launcher' application that will take over the home screen on a mobile phone running on Android and provide a Facebook-centric experience and way of interacting with the device.

Jan Dawson, chief telecoms analyst at Ovum, said last week that the Facebook launcher approach allowed it to target a huge base of Android users, bringing the social media website's total user base to more than a billion people.

For users, the app will make it easier to share information, photos and other content with friends. But for Facebook, this is about becoming more deeply embedded in the operating system on mobile devices and creating a broader platform.

Since Facebook has not designed an operating system for mobile devices, this is the next best thing as it will allow the site to track user's behaviour and present more opportunities to serve up advertising, which is the social-media giant's main business model.

However, that presents the biggest obstacle to success for this experiment. Facebook's objectives and those of users' are once again in conflict. Users

don't want more advertising or tracking, while Facebook wants more of both.

Hence, Facebook is opting for this experiment as it is a lot less risky than developing a phone or an operating system of its own, because if it turns out to be not so successful, it can be discontinued without any loss.

If it does turn out to be successful, then Facebook can build on the model and increase the value provided in the app over time. The biggest challenge will be that it can't replicate this experience on iOS, Windows Phone or BlackBerry – the three other main platforms.

For service providers though, the risk is that Facebook at the front and centre of the device and makes it more integrated with the core of the device, hence accelerating the shift from carrier services to "over the top" services. It would be a big boost for Facebook Messenger and other associated voice and video services.

Ovum forecasts that social messaging would hurt SMS revenues on a global basis, with losses growing from US\$32.6 billion (Bt954 billion) this year to over \$86 billion in 2020. — *The Nation*

In brief...

Google just a blink away

GOOGLE launches the Explorer edition glasses. The specs come with a 5MP camera capable of capturing video at a resolution of 720P and a 16GB internal memory of which 12GB is usable.

The glasses also sport Bluetooth and a new, but energy-saving 802.11B/G WiFi. The MyGlass companion app will allow GPS and SMS messaging, but will run only on devices with Android 4.0.3 or higher. Google claims the display is equivalent to a 25-inch HD monitor about 2.5 meters away and the battery lasts for a whole day on a single charge.

A fridge that does more than cool

GENERAL Electric has stepped up their innovative gear and is bringing to life a brand new model of refrigerator that does more than just keep food cool.

The Cafe French two-door model comes with a dispenser that offers both hot and chilled water. There are pre-programmed settings for hot water, including 90 degrees for warm, 150 degrees for cocoa, 170 degrees for tea, and 185 degrees for soup.

Logitech in 'harmony' with your home

THE Logitech Harmony line of controllers has launched Harmony Smart Control.

This palm-sized device receives commands via radio frequencies or from cell-phones via WiFi and is capable of broadcasting commands to your media set-up via IR or Bluetooth. The Harmony Ultimate, which is also called the Touch Plus, comes with a trigger-like nub for better grip,

Phuket Forum

A weekly round-up of current issues, complaints and questions in the world of Technology, as revealed in the Gazette's Phuket Forum @thephuketforum.net



PG Reader: I'm trying to send a bunch of pictures, but the file sizes are huge. How do I shrink down the size of the files, without hurting the quality of the pictures?



Mr Livewire: I've been using Image Resizer for Windows for years. To find it, Google "Image Resizer". It installs easily. Once installed, you right-click on a picture and choose the size you want. There are several predefined sizes (800 x 600, for example), but you can also set custom sizes. The resized picture is put in the same folder, and given a slightly different name. Works great, and it's free.



PG Reader: I have a house in Rawai, but I'm only here for two or three months at a stretch, a couple times a year. Is there an ADSL service that I can pay for while I'm here, but then have them put it on hold while I'm gone?



Mr Livewire: The only option I can think of is getting a pay-in advance 3G connection. CAT has them. I don't know if any of the landlines have a pay-as-you-go kind of option.

Do you have a tech question you want answered? Visit our tech forum today and make a post to have it answered or just to have a chat with Mr Livewire and other PG readers at thephuketforum.net

SPARTACUS

Bloody history brought back to life on the small screen

By Chris Hudon

IT IS rare for a television series to change the main actor midway through the show and still be successful, but *Spartacus* is one happy exception.

Not for the faint of heart nor weak of constitution, *Spartacus* satisfies your carnal urges and does it all in Shakespearean-style prose plus obscenity. The show is rated TV MA, for mature audiences only.

The series finale, *Spartacus War of the Damned: 'Victory'*, which aired on April 12, marks the conclusion of an incredibly unique and short-lived production.

Spartacus ran for only three seasons, despite having an avid following and a staggering 8.7 rating on IMDB, a popular user-based reviewing website. I consider anything over 6.0 worth a watch since it's very hard to rate highly.

The series is inspired by the historical figure of Spartacus, a Thracian gladiator from 73 to 71 BC, who led a major slave uprising against the Roman Republic.

Executive producers Steven S DeKnight and Robert Tapert focus on structuring the events of Spartacus' obscure early life leading up to the beginning of historical records.

The show can be categorized into two parts; the thrilling man vs man style combat of the early days in the arena which is an indulgent, masculine and bloodthirsty spectacle and the period of prolonged and disorganized war following Spartacus' slave-led rebellion.

After the completion of the first season titled *Spartacus: Blood and Sand*, production for another season was delayed because lead actor Andy Whitfield was diagnosed with

early-stage non-Hodgkin lymphoma. So Starz network took a short hiatus for Whitfield to get treatment, and once he returned produced a six-episode prequel mini-series entitled *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena*.

However, the actor's cancer recurred and he later died on September 11, 2011, forcing producers to cast actor Liam McIntyre in the role of Spartacus for the second season titled *Spartacus: Vengeance*.

This is where the show might have sunk. There are loads of examples of series/movie franchises/bands that were successful and when one main element was changed the whole thing came crashing down. Some notable examples include the character of Darrin Steven on *Bewitched*, Beck Conner of *Roseanne* and in recent times, the replacement of Charlie Sheen on *Two and a Half Men*.

Although I can be apprehensive about change, Liam McIntyre cannot be praised highly enough for saving the show with his committed and engaging performances despite immense pressure from network executives and fans alike. Imagine trying to fill the shoes of such a heroic figure, especially when everyone has established a different image of that character.

On April 12, Starz aired the last episode of their third and final season, titled *Spartacus: War of the Damned*. Note how the show's writers/producers address the inevitable historical reality right in the title of the final season. We know it can't end well for our hero, but how exactly will the show deal with this reality. Does it skirt the fact? You'll have to watch and see.

Andy Daglas, writing on *TV.com*, brilliantly summarizes the final episode saying "the plot essentially mirrored our titular hero's series-long character arc,



SPARTACUS - WAR OF THE DAMNED: The third and final season caps off the unfortunately short lived series, which gained widespread popularity for its visceral, portrayal of ancient history.

with all its visual and expository callbacks to the pilot effectively condensing the backstory and underlining how vital it still remains, so many months and years of ceaseless struggle later. Yet it also made clear how both the character and the show took that inciting injustice and drew a purpose from it that was larger than revenge. In the last in a long line of stirring speeches, Spartacus inspired his people not with talk of blood vendettas or personal glory, but of freedom, an ideal both grand and simple".

One final thing that must be mentioned is the end credits for this show. This is something you almost never hear a show praised for but I literally watched each episode until it stopped playing. The credits combine raw pounding music and superimposed images of our characters

dead and alive portrayed as busts, statues or gods from the old times. Though some will die, all will yet live on.

It can be tedious when living abroad, to keep up with a TV show's air schedule and I love it when a friend introduces me to a series that's already into its third or fourth season and you can download several seasons at once. Hopefully that's what this article has done for you. When you watch a show chronologically, there is far greater continuity to the plot than when it's punctuated by breaks that sometimes last weeks at a time.

So here's the good news, if you haven't seen *Spartacus* yet, or you missed the beginning, you can enjoy the show in its entirety because it's recently concluded. I won't spoil the ending for you... but don't be surprised if someone does.

Pencil it in with Pom

WALK around central Kata on almost any evening and you'll be sure to happen across Phuket artist Singkhon "Pom" Suwannapern seated at his easel, sketching away intently. Around him sit many of his exquisite pencil-drawings, most of them portraits, rendered in such incredible detail that their subject's faces seem larger than life. Below a portrait of HM The King sits one of Angelina Jolie, alongside a dozen much less famous faces of tourists who've commissioned the artist to immortalize their loved ones.

Drawing portraits for tourists certainly helps pay the bills, but a chat with Pom soon reveals that this is just one part of his artistic output. He studied European art at the prestigious Thaivichitsilp Art School in Bangkok for five years and became fascinated with many schools of Western art including the impressionists, surrealists and even pop art.

Pom says that while he draws many portraits in pencil and char-



PICTURE PERFECT: Local artist Pom working on a portrait of his son Tonkla. Photo: Mark Knowles

coal, using a photograph as a reference, painting in oils is his favorite medium.

He tells us that each year he holds an exhibition of his original works, often in Bangkok, with the help of his former teacher.

"I don't do my oil painting for money, I do it for my heart and my soul," he says.

As he names each artist that has inspired him, Monet, Dali, Warhol; Pom flips through a scrapbook containing dozens of photographs of his own paintings which echo the style of the masters he mentions.

It hasn't always been easy making a living as an artist, but Pom's passion has kept him from working in any other field ever since he left art school.

"Sometimes my wife asks me to get a regular job, but I just go walking and don't say anything," he says with a grin.

Pom's tireless dedication to his art, sees him spend six evenings a week at his resident spot in Kata and his remaining time working from his studio in the north of the island, often while nursing his nine-month-old son Tonkla.

If you'd like Pom to draw a portrait of your loved ones you can contact him on 087 891 9380 or visit him in SC Central, near the Siam Bank in Kata from 5pm.

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Planning for World Peace



MY FRIEND Fardley Nerdwell is a no-nonsense fellow with a solution to every problem. Is there a hole in the ozone layer? Shoot a big chunk of styrofoam into space to plug it up. Is there drought in one part of the world and too much rain in another? Use giant fans to blow the rainclouds to the drought region. Every problem has a simple solution if you listen to this one-man think tank.

Since he has aspirations to become the next secretary-general of the UN, Fardley recently turned his attention to the problem of world peace.

The Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs? "Piece o' cake," Fardley boasted. "Let 'em go ahead. All the major powers have nuclear weapons. Why not Iran and North Korea? Why not everybody?"

"One of the great unsung geniuses of modern times, and my personal hero, was the late, great Idi Amin," Fardley continued wistfully. "This remarkable man once proposed that we get rid of conventional armaments and replace them with reasonably priced hydrogen bombs that would be distributed equally throughout the planet."

"If this wise plan were implemented, we would have world-wide nuclear equality. All conflicts would immediately cease. The threat of mutually assured destruction would keep the nations of the world in a state of permanent terror. You'd have nuclear gridlock."

"Wonderful," I said. "How would you solve the Arab-Israeli conflict?"

"Simple," Fardley declared. "Both the Israelis and the Pales-

tinians claim that the land of Israel/Palestine belongs to them. Which one is right? We don't know, so we solve the problem in a dispassionate, rational, and scientific way.

"We have a card game – poker, blackjack, whatever – between Benjamin Netanyahu and Mahmoud Abbas. Maybe that Hamas guy can join too. Winner takes all. Whoever wins the card game gets the whole shebang – Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, maybe even the Golan Heights. The loser and all his people have to leave."

"Where to?" I asked. "The Israelis and the Palestinians both have huge populations. Where are they going to relocate?"

Fardley shrugged. "Hey, I'm a theorist and a conceptualizer, not a bean-counter," he retorted. "I deal with the big picture. Let lesser minds work out the petty details. Antarctica, maybe. Greenland. Baffin Island. The Sahara Desert. Any place where their leader can work on improving his card game for a rematch."

"The problem is that the West is always trying to make peace in the Middle East. Fuhgeddaboutit! The natural state of the Middle East is war. The people there all want to kill each other. So let nature take its course. Let the conflicting parties fight it out, then deal with the winners – if there are any left. We can also grab their oil."

"You really are a statesman, Fardley," I commended him. "A great humanitarian, too."

"Thank you," Fardley said with a smile. "And soon I will be secretary-general of the UN."

"I bet the world can hardly wait," I said.

Ye Olde Curmudgeon can be flamed c/o s.tsow@ymail.com, but if Fardley becomes secretary-general of the UN, he plans to seek refuge on another planet.

Give a man a fish and he has food for a day.



Teach a man to fish and he has to buy bamboo rods, graphite reels, monofilament lines, neoprene waders, tackle boxes, lures, spinners, 20 pocket vests, fish finders, depth sounders, radar, boats, trailers, global positioning systems, coolers and six-packs.



This sign is not in Phuket.



Neither is this one.



So chainsaws aren't allowed on planes anymore?



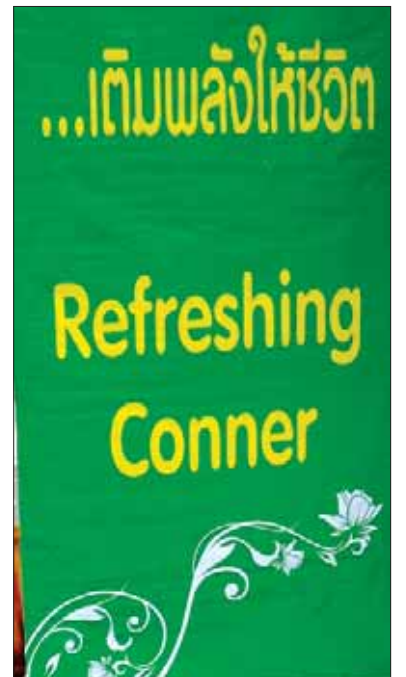
But what does it mean?



Avoid the herpes soup. Photo Mark Knowles



Anger at the gym.



Conner who?



Ever since it's been waiting for a car to come by. Photo and sign: Bob Mott

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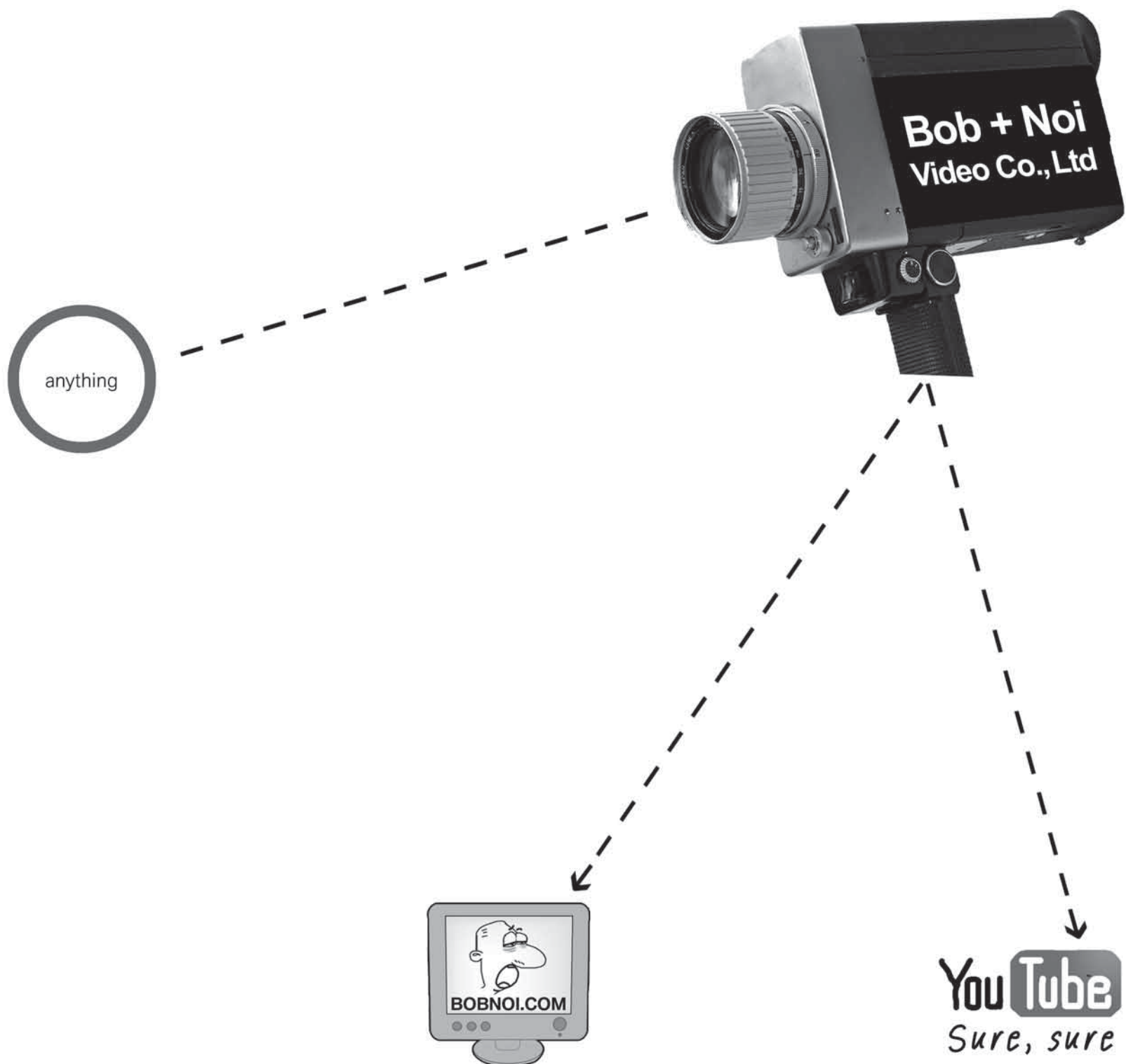
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Phuket Gazette



JUK'S SPOT THE DIFFERENCE: Find the 10 differences between these pictures.

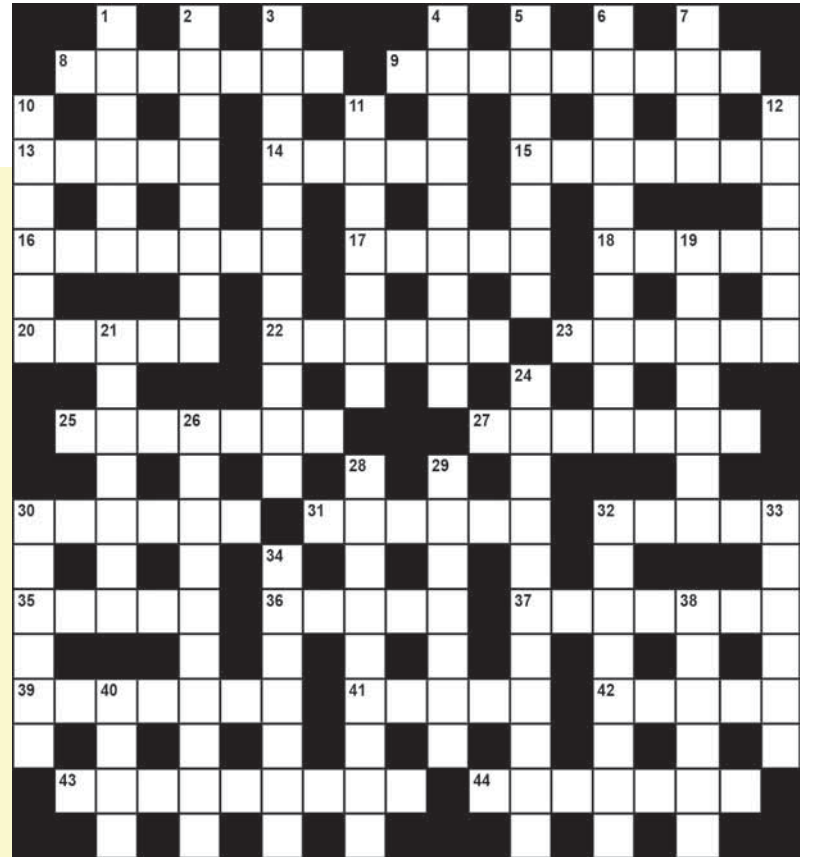


Artist and brand consultant Miguel Kirjon lives in Phuket with his partner Lin Prachakrich and publishes a series of children's books "Juk's Adventures" in 9 languages. See juksadventures.com for more information.

COFFEE break

Across:

8. Moves regally in the balcony (7)
9. In canal, hart causes a quack (9)
13. Increase in salary for Rear Admiral is noted (5)
14. Pass round right in the shade (5)
15. Sharply going up the French spire (7)
16. Zulu weapon for fool, for example. First class! (7)
17. Right, a Thai greeting in a place in Phuket (5)
18. Note sun moves East so follow (5)
20. To shortly picture the subject (5)
22. Attraction of a liberal enticement (6)
23. Lend a hand as son first (6)
25. Expert, the French fizz (7)
27. Counting on ring round an English cathedral city (7)
30. The French gnu moved right to find a South Asian monkey (6)
31. A place rebuilt as an imposing edifice (6)
32. Many a Himalayan ox in a canoe! (5)
35. M'sieur, turn deserter for a French revolutionary extremist (5)
36. Former art turns supplementary (5)
37. Put to death former wife, note pretty (7)
39. Cites as proof in dud case perhaps (7)
41. Go round in ladies' attire (5)
42. Bit of flavor (5)
43. Nah! Axe log carefully into having several faces (9)
44. Big monkeys have graduate gifts (7)



Down:

1. Caught sailor in Southern huts (6)
2. Very sensitive being left in large move I note (8)
3. In city all carp in confusion, almost (11)
4. Support dependent heading to land (9)
5. Doctor, a second spasm! Serious! (7)
6. Inattentively move crassly around the Spanish East (10)
7. Beef or fish? (4)
10. Right, possible taunt about one missing school (6)
11. Slur, pal, about those comprising more than one (7)
12. Deprived, fret, be upset (6)
19. Turn Northeast, unknown copse (7)
21. Parent could be right as colleague (7)
24. Compliant, put off-line at arrangement (11)
26. Hard cover expert a new member of an aquatic class (10)
28. At sea, as in new person from China, for example (4,5)
29. Am a liar about infection common in Thailand's borders (7)
30. May ail, cooking longan in Thailand (6)
32. We key out preparation of Thai noodles (8)
33. Note, Eastern perk may be out for zoo employee (6)
34. Son, noises can make a sitting (7)
38. Unacknowledged, United Nations turn up wildebeests (6)
40. Tide goes out, eat less (4)

Cryptic crossword compiled by Patong Bill. Answers on page 31.

TAURUS (April 21-May 21):

As May gets under way, Taureans who have been stuck between a rock and a hard place see clear answers. Life is full of interesting possibilities, with good luck peaking around the middle of the month. Your romantic outlook is steady, but those who are single will appreciate their freedom more. If your birthday falls during the week ahead, expect to have more control during the coming year.

GEMINI (May 22-June 21):

Geminis who recently had a bad experience with someone are advised to think twice before naming and shaming. The stars suggest that taking the high road will give you more peace of mind in the long run. Those who are finding it hard to make ends meet should discover new outlets for their creative skills. A water sign's success can inspire you this weekend. Lucky days for love are Monday and Tuesday.

CANCER (June 22-July 23):

Calmer energy is forecast to help Cancerians recover from a trying time and consider how to move forward. As the month of May progresses, you will be encouraged to seek guidance. Whether this

concerns practical issues or if it's related to spiritual matters, the stars are ready to support your efforts. Romance with another water sign gets more serious, but it will be harder to find common ground with an earth sign.

LEO (July 24-Aug 22):

It can be a case of giving more than you receive during the first half of May, but this doesn't necessarily relate to money. The stars indicate that those born under the sign of Leo will be called upon to share their skills and knowledge. What goes around comes around, but it would be wise to remember your own needs, particularly where family are concerned. Your lucky color is pearl pink.

VIRGO (Aug 23-Sept 23):

Finances fall under the spotlight and Virgoans can be faced with some serious choices. Those who are struggling to meet payments can learn something to their advantage midweek. If you are in a committed relationship, your partner's point of view is worth listening to – there are signs that they have been feeling left out in the cold. Those who are single are forecast to be swept off their feet by an air sign.

YOUR horoscope By Isla Star

LIBRA (Sept 24-Oct 23):

The month of May is forecast to start with a burst of success. Many of those born under the sign of Libra could find themselves basking in the limelight this week. True friends will be happy that you are doing well, but jealousy is predicted to color a relationship with a fire sign green. In the realm of romance, you could be caught off guard by something your partner says this weekend.

SCORPIO (Oct 24-Nov 22):

After a series of frustrating detours around the end of April, Scorpios should be back on track this week. A power struggle at work that was not resolved to your satisfaction can be more easily seen as water under the bridge. The stars suggest that financial gain by the middle of the month will help you to forget this incident. Romance with another water sign is sparkling this weekend.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23-Dec 21):

Changes in your personal life can come as a result of branching out in the world of work. Those Sagittarians who recently started a new job or business venture could start to drift away from their familiar social circle. The stars advise that some friends will not take this too kindly. Romantically speaking, a blind date with an air sign leaves you wanting to spend more time with this person.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22-Jan 20):

Many Capricorns will be considering involvement in charitable causes at the start of May. The stars indicate that this can cause ripples in relationships – a water sign family member can show their stubborn streak this weekend. Where finances are concerned, there are hints that a discrepancy shouldn't be blown out of proportion midweek. It would be wise to remember that everyone can make mistakes. Glowing days for romance are Tuesday and Wednesday.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19):

Some Aquarians could still be dealing with issues in their personal lives. As May progresses, this will fade into the background; in the meantime,

the stars advise taking some distance from people you are not seeing eye to eye with. Earth signs will be compatible company, and one of these can inspire you to try something different where work is concerned. Finances are fortunate on Wednesday and Thursday.

PISCES (Feb 20-March 20):

Many of those born under the sign of Pisces will still be intent on keeping a low profile this week. This can enable you to see areas of your life that will benefit from some spring cleaning. By the middle of May you should be refreshed enough to go out and seek new directions, one of which may involve relocation. A close water sign friend can sow seeds for thought this weekend.

ARIES (March 21-April 20):

Arians are forecast to have a lot going on until the middle of the month, but you can make things easier on yourself. The stars suggest that valuable time and energy can be wasted by worrying about what other people think. Balancing budgets becomes less stressful when a new source of income presents itself. Romance is unsettled – a new partner may find it hard to understand your need for privacy.

International Sport

French Force Majeure

By Patrick Campbell

LAST weekend saw two eagerly awaited semifinals of Europe’s premier rugby competition, the Heineken Cup, which pitted French foes against Irish and English opponents.

Saturday’s encounter between twice former champions Munster and French league-topping Clermont Auvergne, was a bruising, no-quarter-asked affair played out before a vociferous army of yellow-clad home supporters, and ominously dominated in the first half by a massive French pack and the boot of scrum-half Morgan Parra.

Clermont were the nearly men of Gallic rugby – ten national finals before becoming champions in 2010 – but they are now hugely experienced and used to winning.

Though Munster conceded only one early try after a bullocking run by wing Nalaga, the relatively young side saw little ball, and were penned for long periods in their own half. Ominous signs.

Yet in the second period, the fighting Irish came back strongly, aided by shrewd



MASTER CLASS: Jonny Wilkinson scored all the points for Toulon against Saracens. Photo: Reuters

grubber-kicking from 36-year-old Ronan O’Gara. In the end, the teams were separated by a mere six points. A (converted) try, which nearly materialized when Casey Laulala fumbled a bobbling ball over the line, would have created an unlikely triumph, but it was a day when defenses held firm and a late series of Munster attacks silenced the

home crowd, but ultimately came to nothing. Final score 16-10.

Sunday’s game, played at Twickenham before a disappointingly small crowd of 25,000, was try-less, but never lacked for commitment, pace or excitement.

Toulon’s expensively assembled side, with a budget three times that of Saracens, and

stacked with overseas players, looked more powerful, especially in the front and back rows where English prop Sheridan, and a back row containing Argentinian Lobbe and South African Roussouw carried too much fire power.

That there were no tries was a tribute to two unrelenting defenses, but though Saracens had two guilt-edged chances in the second half when passes from Farrell and Tomkins went forward, the match was effectively decided by the boot of Jonny Wilkinson, who not only unerringly kicked seven out of his seven penalties (one from over half-way), but delivered the “*coup de grace*” with a nerveless dropped goal seven minutes from time to make the score 24-12.

He was man of the match and still talked of as a possible Lions’ candidate. His consolatory pat to a despondent young Owen Farrell was the mark of a gentleman as well as a genius.

As for the grand final on May 18, it will be an all-French affair – though both teams will speak several languages on the pitch.

Gatland names his Lions squad for tour of Australia

AS LIONS coach Warren Gatland had presciently predicted: “We are not worried about who we are going to select ... it is who we are going to leave out.”

Sam Warburton is named as captain, ahead of Paul O’Connell. There are only two fly halves, Johnny Sexton and Owen Farrell, and no place for Jonny Wilkinson, or England captain Chris Robshaw. Two injury-plagued

players who have played little recent rugby – Dan Lydiate and Tommy Bowe – get the nod.

Counting their good fortune will be English props Matt Stevens, who renounced international rugby last season, and the youthful Mako Vunipola, a newcomer of enormous promise. Geoff Parling is surprisingly preferred at lock to emerging star, Joe Launchbury.

– Patrick Campbell

Lions squad for the tour of Australia:

Backs: Leigh Halfpenny, Stuart Hogg, Rob Kearney, Tommy Bowe, Alex Cuthbert, Sean Maitland, George North, Jonathan Davies, Brian O’Driscoll, Jamie Roberts, Manu Tuilagi, Owen Farrell, Jonathan Sexton, Conor Murray, Mike Phillips and Ben Youngs.

Forwards: Dan Cole, Cian Healy, Gethin Jenkins, Adam Jones, Matt Stevens, Mako

Vunipola, Dylan Hartley, Richard Hibbard, Tom Youngs, Ian Evans, Richie Gray, Alun-Wyn Jones, Paul O’Connell, Geoff Parling, Tom Croft, Toby Faletau, Jamie Heaslip, Dan Lydiate, Sean O’Brien, Justin Tipuric and Sam Warburton (captain).

Wales dominate the squad with 15 players. They are joined by 10 Englishmen, nine Irishmen and three Scotsmen.

FA begins search for descendants of men who created football’s rules

THE English Football Association is searching for the living descendants of the founding fathers of football – the eight men who created the rules of the game and the world’s first football association 150 years ago.

Relatively little is known about some of the eight, who met at the Freemasons Tavern in London’s Covent Garden on October 26, 1863 to codify the first 13 laws of the game which gave rise to the global spread of the sport.

The FA is searching both within Britain and internationally for their descendants with cultural historian Jane Clayton from the International Football Institute in Lancashire leading the hunt.

The eight men at that first meeting were Ebenezer Cobb Morley (1831-1924), Charles William Alcock (1842-1907), Arthur Pember (1835-1886), Francis Maule Campbell (1843-1920), John Forster Alcock (1841-1910), Herbert Thomas Steward (1839-1915), George Twizell Wawn (1840-1914) and James Turner, whose dates of birth and death are not currently known.

Charles Alcock was the man who created the FA Cup, which

began in the 1871-72 season and was based on an old knockout game he had played at Harrow School, while Morley was the first secretary of the FA.

Pember, a barrister, was the first president of the FA from 1863-67 before he emigrated to the United States in 1868 and worked as a journalist for the *New York Times* where he wrote a number of travel books before living in Australia and New Zealand.

Living descendants that can be identified and located, will be sent an invitation to a special ceremony at Wembley in October where their ancestors will be honored.

Dr Clayton told *Reuters*: “I have been scratching the layers away and we are trying to build up a picture of some of these people we do not know much about.

“It is impossible to know how many direct living descendants there are after 150 years and two world wars, but we hope to make some real progress by making the search public. Some people might not even realize they are related and could have a very nice surprise if they look back at their own family histories.

“This is an important historical search.

“We know so much about people who were pioneers in their chosen fields but surprisingly, little is known about the individuals most responsible for gifting us the most popular sport in the world.

“We have initiated the historical search and while information is limited, we have a good base upon which to work. We are confident that by October, through genealogical research and the public’s help we can trace some of the living descendants of the founding fathers of football.”

The original 1863 FA Minute Book, written in Morley’s hand, contains the first laws of football and such is its historical significance, it has been labeled among the most important books of all time.

England manager Roy Hodgson added: “We should all recognize not only the sporting contribution that these men have made but the impact that football has had in this country and around the world.

“Football is part of the fabric of our society and without the vision of these eight men 150 years ago, it may not have come to exist. It is only right that we honor the founding fathers of this nation’s favorite game.”

– Reuters



The FA Cup has come a long way since Charles Alcock created the tournament in 1871. Man City play Wigan in this year’s final. Photo: Reuters

PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES			
SATURDAY, 4 MAY 2013		21:00	
Fulham	vs	Reading	
Norwich	vs	Aston Villa	
Swansea	vs	Man City	
Tottenham	vs	Southampton	
West Brom	vs	Wigan	
West Ham	vs	Newcastle	
SATURDAY, 4 MAY 2013		23:30	
QPR	vs	Arsenal	
SUN, 5 MAY			
Liverpool	vs	Everton	
SUN, 5 MAY			
Man Utd	vs	Chelsea	
TUESDAY, 7 MAY 2013		02:00	
Sunderland	vs	Stoke	

PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE			
	TEAM	P	PTS
1	Man Utd	35	85
2	Man City	34	71
3	Chelsea	34	65
4	Arsenal	35	64
5	Tottenham	34	62
6	Everton	35	59
7	Liverpool	35	54
8	WBA	34	48
9	Swansea	34	42
10	West Ham	35	42
11	Fulham	35	40
12	Stoke	35	40
13	Southampton	35	39
14	Norwich	35	38
15	Sunderland	35	37
16	Aston Villa	35	37
17	Newcastle	35	37
18	Wigan	34	32
19	QPR	35	25
20	Reading	35	25

International Sport

NBA star comes out as gay

By Julian Linden

JASON Collins, a veteran center in the National Basketball Association (NBA), announced on April 29 that he was gay, becoming the first active player from any US professional sports league to publicly reveal his homosexuality.

Collins, a free agent who played with the Washington Wizards and Boston Celtics during the NBA's 2012-13 regular season, made the announcement in an interview with *Sports Illustrated* that was published on Monday.

"I didn't set out to be the first openly gay athlete playing in a major American team sport. But since I am, I'm happy to start the conversation," he said.

"I wish I wasn't the kid in the classroom raising his hand and saying, 'I'm different.' If I had my way, someone else would have already done this. Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

In the ultra-scrutinized world of US professional sports, there had never been an openly gay player in any of America's major professional sports leagues, although some had revealed their sexual orientation after retiring.

In a country with openly gay politicians, entertainers and even soldiers, professional sports had become a final frontier and questions were being asked why sports, which helped play a key role in changing public opinion on racial discrimination, was out of step with the rest of American society.

Former US President Bill Clinton, whose

daughter Chelsea was a classmate of Collins at Stanford University, applauded Collins for coming out.

"Jason's announcement today is an important moment for professional sports and in the history of the LGBT community," Clinton said in a statement.

"It is also the straightforward statement of a good man who wants no more than what so many of us seek: to be able to be who we are; to do our work; to build families and to contribute to our communities. For so many members of the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) community, these simple goals remain elusive.

"I hope that everyone, particularly Jason's colleagues in the NBA, the media and his many fans extend to him their support and the respect he has earned."

NBA Commissioner David Stern also praised Collins for breaking the barrier.

"Jason has been a widely respected player and teammate throughout his career and we are proud he has assumed the leadership mantle on this very important issue," Stern said in a statement.

Collins, 34, has played for six NBA teams since entering the league in 2001 and twice appeared in the playoffs. He said he wants to continue playing and hopes to find a new team.

It had seemed like only matter of time until an active player said he was gay after the issue had become one of the hottest topics in North America, no more so than in the National Football League (NFL), the most macho of America's pro sports.



COURAGEOUS: Jason Collins (left), became the first active player from any of the US professional sports leagues to publicly reveal his homosexuality. Photo: Reuters

In the days leading up to this year's Super Bowl in New Orleans, San Francisco 49ers cornerback Chris Culliver told reporters he would not welcome a homosexual teammate into the locker room.

He later retracted his comments but reports have since emerged of NFL teams asking college players about their sexuality at a scouting combine in February.

This prompted the New York State attorney general to send a letter to the NFL,

urging the league to take action and adopt a formal policy of sexual discrimination.

Culliver's comments are not typical of the attitude of all professional sportsmen. Indeed, there are several high-profile NFL players, most notably Chris Kluwe and Brendon Ayanbadejo, who have advocated for gay rights.

Both believe it was only a matter of time before a professional player came out publicly.

— Reuters

New president for Asian football

THE Asian Football Confederation (AFC) went to the polls last Thursday to elect a new leader, but with question marks over the candidates and only a two-year term for the winner, hopes for reform at the crisis-hit body may have to be put on hold.

United Arab Emirates football chief Yousuf Al Serkal, Saudi Arabian Hafez Al Medlej, Thailand's Worawi Makudi and Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa of Bahrain are running to succeed disgraced former president Mohamed Bin Hammam, banned from football for life by FIFA for bribery in 2011.

The AFC has been in limbo ever since with lengthy appeals by the Qatari proving unsuccessful, while Zhang Jilong's interim leadership has been beset by numerous match fixing and graft scandals among member associations.

Should Al Serkal or Al Medlej win the vote in Kuala Lumpur their attempts to bring about reform could be hampered by their lack of a voice at FIFA.

The fourth AFC seat, reserved for the president, on the world governing body's all-powerful executive committee cannot be taken up again until 2015.

Worawi is the only candidate who already holds a FIFA 'exco' seat having retained his position at the top table of world football

for another four years in 2011.

Sheikh Salman has opted to enter a separate vote for a FIFA executive seat and runs against Qatar 2022 World Cup organizer Hassan Al Thawadi to replace Zhang.

"How can we have a president who cannot have our voice in FIFA?" asked the Bahraini in an interview with *Reuters* earlier this month.

"To have a candidate running for just one post and not another I regard as a compromise, a weak position just to accept what they can get."

Sheikh Salman looks to be favorite to claim a winning majority from the 47 member associations and has talked about bringing greater transparency to the AFC, but his critics have raised questions about the crackdown of a pro-democracy uprising at home in 2011.

Two human rights groups called on FIFA President Sepp Blatter to remove the 46-year-old Manchester United-supporting member of the Bahraini royal family from the election, saying local players, referees and administrators were tortured for their part in the uprising.

Sheikh Salman denied the claims, and the accusations have not prevented the head of the influential Olympic Council of Asia, Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah,

from backing his campaign.

That move has been criticized by Al Serkal, who says the OCA have been 'meddling in the vote'.

Al Serkal has promised to declare all benefits and expenses he accrues as president should he win the vote in a transparency campaign that has offered the most detailed pledges of the quartet.

Al Serkal and Sheikh Salman have both tipped themselves for victory but with the duo likely to split the vote in the 13-member West Asian Soccer Federation, Al Medlej has emerged as a compromise candidate.

The Saudi official has been considered an outsider and frequently talked about pulling out of the race unless Sheikh Salman and Al Serkal withdraw.

His campaign has helped increase his profile, though, which could possibly help with the 2015 election, should he stand, when the AFC presidency reverts to a four-year term.

The shorter term on offer this time is a result of Bin Hammam's exit. The Qatari was elected unopposed as AFC president for a third four-year term in 2011, leaving two years on that cycle.

Bin Hammam had been bidding to become the first Asia head of FIFA but his campaign ended in disgrace when he was found guilty



TRANSPARENCY: Sheikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al-Khalifa (center) of Bahrain is the favorite to be elected AFC president. Photo: Reuters

of offering money to Caribbean voters in return for their backing in the election against Blatter.

Accompanying Bin Hammam on that ill-fated trip to Trinidad was Worawi, who has also had to battle claims of wrongdoing during his 16 years as a FIFA executive committee member.

The Thai says he has the backing of the Southeast Asian region's 11 members but his hopes of attracting the eight votes in South Asia could have taken a hit by FIFA's 90-day suspension of Sri Lankan ally Manil Fernando, who was also in Trinidad, for alleged

misuse of AFC funds.

These issues, along with the very real problems of match fixing, disharmony among some members and a lack of professionalism among others leaves the winner of the election with a tough task to get the AFC moving in the right direction.

Worawi told *Reuters* last week he was the man for the job but also acknowledged the scale of the task.

"I don't promise miracles," the Thai said. "I am not a magician. I don't have a magic wand."

— Reuters



Namchok Tantipokhakul won the Luang Prabang Laos Open.

Thai wins Laos Open

EXPLOSIVE young Thai player Namchok Tantipokhakul claimed an impressive victory in the Luang Prabang Laos Open last week. The US\$100,000 tournament is the third leg of the 2013 ASEAN PGA Tour.

The 25-year-old held off his more senior compatriot Udorn Duangdech and Ratchapol Juntavara to win by four shots at Luang Prabang Golf Club.

On the last day, Namchok closed with a two-under-par 70, Udorn carded a 73, while Ratchapol returned to the club house in 69.

Namchok ended with a four-round total of nine under. Powerfully built Namchok was one shot ahead of Udorn at the start of day. However, he bogeyed his first two holes to lose the lead but by the turn, helped by four birdies in five holes, he was three ahead of Udorn.

A birdie at 15 saw him go four ahead and give him a nice cushion to close out the tournament.

"It means a lot to me to win a tournament from start to finish. It is not easy, it's very hard work. Four days of tension and concentration," said Namchok, who won US\$16,260.

Namchok burst onto the professional scene in 2009 when he won twice on the ASEAN PGA Tour and claimed the Order of Merit title.

In an attempt to improve his game, in particular the mental part of it, the following year he was among a group of Thai players who immersed themselves in Buddhism during a visit to an institute in India.

He entered the monk hood for eight days at The Bodhigaya Vijjalaya Institute 980 in the area where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment.

The spiritual sojourn appeared to work, as that year he came narrowly close to recording big victories after finishing joint second in the Thailand Open on OneAsia and losing in play-off at the Black Mountain

Masters. He also lost in a play-off at the Mercedes-Benz Masters Indonesia, another ASEAN PGA event.

However, more success has been hard to come by since then but conquering Laos could mark another trail of trophies.

Udorn, aged 42, was also chasing his third ASEAN PGA victory but had a poor day making two bogeys and just one birdie. Ratchapol birdied 17 and 18 to catch him.

"I could not find my timing today. Nothing went right but it was important to be in contention. Namchok is always hard to beat," said Udorn.

Udorn is something of a late developer in the game as it wasn't until 2010, 10 years after he turned professional, that he started to find his feet in the paid ranks.

That year he won the Singha Pattaya Open on the ASEAN PGA Tour and the King's Cup on the Asian Tour.

The following season he claimed another ASEAN PGA title at the Singha Esan Open.

The Luang Prabang Laos Open continues to be a tournament of many firsts.

Despite the event being in only its second year it was covered live for all four days on Laos Star TV – a channel watched by nearly 80 per cent of the country's population.

It was broadcast live for two hours on both Wednesday and Thursday, and four hours each on Friday and Saturday.

It is a remarkable achievement for the game of golf in a country where the sport in its embryonic stage.

The next tournament on the ASEAN PGA Tour is the PGM-ASEAN A'Famosa Masters in Malaysia. The US\$60,000 event will be played from May 8 to 11 at the A'Famosa Golf Resort.

A record 12 tournaments are being staged this year worth US\$1,095,000 providing an abundance of lucrative playing opportunities.

– *Phuket Gazette*

FAT head set to fire coach



POWER: Worawi Makudi, Football Authority of Thailand president. Photo: Reuters

BELEAGUERED Winfried Schaefer's days as coach of the Thai national football team now seem numbered after the Football Association of Thailand (FAT) started looking for legal possibilities of ending the German's contract.

The veteran coach's reign has been under intense scrutiny since the national squad failed to reclaim the Asean Championship title last December.

The German has faced even more pressure in recent months following Thailand's faltering campaign in the Asian Cup qualifiers.

Last week, Worawi Makudi, the president of FAT, said the organization would decide on the future of the 63-year-old after the May 2 election, in which Warawi is bidding to become the new head of the Asian Football Confederation.

The Thai FA boss revealed he has already assigned the association's lawyer

to study the terms of Schaefer's contract to see whether the termination of it was legally possible.

"We have to accept that the results of the Thai team under Schaefer have not been not quite good. It looks like we will suffer elimination in the Asian Cup qualifiers.

"There are also growing calls from the fans for a change of coach. Moreover, Schaefer, himself, has a poor relationship with the Thai media. We are looking to find a solution on the matter soon.

"Our lawyer is already looking into whether there is a possibility to terminate his contract. But I first will talk to Schaefer to discuss it with him personally in the second week of May.

"If we are unable to continue working together then we have to find a way ensure an exit by mutual consent," said Worawi.

– *The Nation*

2015 Bangkok Grand Prix gets green light

THE route for the proposed 2015 Formula One night race in Bangkok has been approved by The Sports Authority of Thailand.

Kanokphand Chulakasem, governor of the Sports Authority of Thailand said recently that the 5.995km track will start and finish at the Royal Thai Naval Dockyard, go along Maha That Road, Na Phra Lan Road, Na Phra That Road, Chakrabongse Road, Phra Sumen Road, Ratchadamnoen

Avenue, Maha Chai Road and Thai Wang Road.

Drivers will go past Victory Monument, the Grand Palace and through the area where Mark Webber completed a demonstration run in a Red Bull F1 car in 2010.

The layout and the final plans for the grand prix will be submitted to the government for a final sign-off in the next three months.

– *Phuket Gazette*



Sebastian Vettel. Photo: Reuters

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Grimes grill Dylan Young

By Andrew Scott

YOUNG karters Ben and Sam Grimes, who compete in the 125cc Junior Class in the Rotax Asia Max Challenge (AMC) in Malaysia and the Thai Championships, recently interviewed racing driver Dylan Young about his career.

The interview was the perfect opportunity for Dylan to pass on some of his experience to the brothers and for Ben and Sam to get some advice and tips to help them in what could be a very promising career in motor sport.

Grimes Brothers: What racing series are you competing in and what is your goal for the season?

Dylan Young: I am currently in MRF Formula 2000 which is very similar to formula 3. The races are held this year in Singapore, Abu Dhabi and Bahrain.

I would like to finish in the top three of the championship and I will be looking to start testing in June or July. That's the tough thing about being based on Phuket – there is no race track for me to practice on. I have a simulator and I see you guys have a simulator, which is good prep when you can't get out and practice.

When did you first get interested in racing?

I became interested when I was about six after my dad took me the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne. I was hooked straight away by the noise and speed but it was a long time until I could actually start karting.

I wanted to start karting when I was about 12 but my school wasn't very lenient to me taking time off. So it wasn't until I was about 16 or 17 years old that I started.

How often do you train in a week and how important is fitness?

I spend six days a week training. A lot of it is aerobic, strength training and a little work on the neck. Fitness training is very important and it's something that can give you the edge over other drivers. I am a night time trainer and I tend to do my runs at sunset. I do about two

hours of weights and running.

Do you see yourself as an aggressive driver like Lewis Hamilton or a smooth driver like Jenson Button?

We analyzed this in Formula BMW in 2011. I had a teammate who was very aggressive but I have been told that I am quite smooth like Jenson Button. I think I should be more aggressive not just competing with other drivers but also with the car. Hopefully this year I can be a bit more aggressive.

Who was your hero in motor sport?

I would have to say Michael Schumacher. As I mentioned earlier about the fitness, Schumacher used his fitness to take it to the next level. He never left the track when the day finished at 5pm, he was always the last one to leave and went over every single piece of data with the engineers.

He realized that it was more than just him and the car, it was a team. He had a big influence on my interest in the sport.

What do you consider to be your best racing achievement to date?

It's a difficult one but I would say the Singapore F1 Grand Prix event in 2011. That was a tough year for me. I lost sponsorship in the middle of the year and was on the sidelines for five months. At F1 events you only get a 30 minute practice session and I had missed a lot of sessions with the other drivers. I had half an hour to practice and ended up getting 5th on the grid. It wasn't first but given the months out it felt like a win.

When did you step up from karts to single seaters?

I was 20 or 21. I had planned to do it earlier but sponsorship reasons



WISDOM: Ben Grimes (left), Dylan Young (center) and Sam Grimes talk all things racing. Photo: Andrew Scott

meant I had to wait. I first drove a single seater when I was about 18.

What does a single seater feel like compared to karts?

A big difference is how your own body can't influence the car. In karts you can move around to influence the kart.

Obviously in a single seater you have a gear box and suspension. It is faster but the tracks are so much bigger that karting still feels fast because you don't have long

everything is bigger. The real difference is the driving style. I would suggest listening. I had a really good engineer to start with and it's learning again in the same way you go from primary school to high school.

What do you hope to achieve in the future for your racing career?

All drivers would say Formula One. That is the goal. It is very difficult and my window to get there is probably 3-4 years. I will then have to make a choice about what to do as I can't keep on banging on the door. I would have to go to Europe next year for GP2 to help me make the move into Formula One. If Formula

professional and make a career out of it is also a goal.

Do you still get nervous before the start of the race?

I do and I think if you don't there is something wrong. In the beginning I didn't like to talk too much to people but now I don't mind having a talk and even have a joke. I still want to focus but I find that if you are in the car before the race and you have a little joke with your engineer it helps to relax you. I also suggest listening to the right kind of music before the race to help you relax.

Have you struggled to get appropriate funding through your career?

I have, but I am not the only one. Appropriate funding is crucial to climbing the steps and that means thinking outside of the box and putting in the hard work. And that means how do you differentiate yourself from the opposition – other drivers. It is not only motor sport as you will have to take sponsorship funds away from other sports. It takes a lot of networking.



Dylan Young with his MRF Formula 2000 racing car.

between corners.

I don't think you will be shocked at the speed because

One doesn't happen, there are many other racing categories out there. Anything where I can be

Number 1 seed wins ITF

THE final of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) women's tournament between number one seed Luksika Kumkhum and Lisa Whybourn was held at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club (TSLC) on April 27.

Thailand's Luksika Kumkhum won the final 6:0, 7:5 to claim the first week's ITF tournament.

The number one seed used her strong two handed forehand and backhand to take an easy first set as Lisa struggled to cope with the pace of the match. In the second set, Lisa tried to make a comeback but Luksika held on to win the second set 7:5 and the championship.

In her semifinal, Luksika Kumkhum beat Melanie Klaffner 6:2, 6:7, 7:5 in a hard

fought semifinal match.

In the other semifinal, Thailand's Peangtarn Plipuech lost to Lisa Whybourn 6:3, 2:6, 7:6

Nicha Lertpitaksinchai and Peangtarn Plipuech won the women's doubles final against Tara Moore and Melanie South 6:3, 5:7, 11:9 on April 26

TSLC is hosting the second women's tournament of the 2013 ITF round from April 27 to May 4.

– Phuket Gazette

The event is proudly sponsored by the Phuket Gazette, PGTV and 'Phuket Today', the island's only national television show, broadcast daily on True Visions (channels 99 and 58).



Lisa Whybourn in action during an earlier round at the ITF women's tournament.

Phuket downed by Air Force

By Andrew Scott

PHUKET FC lost 2-1 against Air Force United in their Yamaha League 1 clash on Saturday.

The match was the second time in three days the two teams played each other at Thupateme Stadium, on the northern side of Bangkok, with Phuket knocking Air Force out of the Thai FA Cup 1-0 on April 24.

Nenebi, Dudu and Sato, who were rested for the FA Cup match, were recalled to the starting 11.

Before the match, Phuket were joint top of the league, but their inferior goal difference kept them in 3rd on 15 points, and Air Force were just below them in 5th on 13 points.

Tongchai Kuenkhunthod gave Phuket the lead in first half stoppage time, but second half goals from Thai striker Sirodom

Singthippan and Nigerian midfielder Julius Oiboh gave Air Force the win to avenge their FA Cup loss.

The defeat dropped Phuket to 5th in the league and moved Air Force to 3rd, level on points with the top two teams PTT Rayong and BCU FC on 16 points.

The Islanders play 4th place Singh Tha Reua at Surakul Stadium on May 4 at 6.30pm. Phuket will host Ratchaburi Mitr Phol FC in the Thai FA Cup round of 32 on June 26th.

Other results.

Ayyuthaya 1 - 0 Nakhon Pathom
Khon Kaen 1 - 1 Singh Tha Reua
Rayong Utd 1 - 1 Nakhon Ratchasima
Trat 3 - 2 TTM
BBCU 1 - 1 PTT Rayong
Saraburi 4 - 1 Bangkok FC
Siam Navy 1 - 0 Rayong FC
Si Racha 3 - 1 Krabi

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Nakhon Pathom VS Trat	TTM FC VS Saraburi
SATURDAY, 4 MAY 2013	SUNDAY, 5 MAY 2013
Rayong FC VS Khon Kaen	Bangkok FC VS Rayong Utd.
Krabi VS Royal Navy	SUNDAY, 5 MAY 2013
SATURDAY, 4 MAY 2013	PTT Rayong VS Sriracha
Korat VS BCU	Air Force Utd. VS Ayutthaya FC

YAMAHA LEAGUE ONE TABLE				
	TEAM	P	GD	PTS
1	PTT Rayong	8	6	16
2	BBCU	8	5	16
3	Air Force Utd.	8	5	16
4	Singhtarua FC	8	4	16
5	Phuket	8	4	15
6	Krabi	8	3	12
7	Bangkok	8	0	12
8	Trat	8	0	11
9	Si Racha	8	0	11
10	Saraburi	8	2	10
11	Royal Navy	8	0	10
12	Korat FC	8	-1	10
13	Nakhon Pathom	8	-2	9
14	Rayong Utd.	8	0	8
15	Khon kaen	8	-5	6
16	Ayutthaya FC	8	-6	6
17	Rayong FC	8	-5	4
18	TTM FC	8	-8	3

Women's ITF champion talks tennis

THAILAND'S Luksika Kumkhum beat Lisa Whybourn 6:0, 7:5 in the final of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) women's tournament at Thanyapura Sports and Leisure Club on April 27.

The 19-year-old from Chantaburi was the tournament's number one seed and she spoke to the *Gazette* before her victory in the final about her tennis career.

Phuket Gazette: Do any members of your family play sports?

Luksika Kumkhum: Yes, my father taught me how to play tennis when I was 4-years-old. He played to a good level in Thailand but he was not a professional. He represented Thailand at under-14 level.

How did you get to where you are today in tennis?

When I was 6-years-old I competed in a tournament which was enjoyable and made me want to play tennis more and more. I decided that I would like to become a professional tennis player when I was 14 and joined the ITF junior circuit that year.

Who are your tennis idols?

I like Thailand's Tamarine Tanasugarn and Novak Djokovic. I like Djokovic's style.

Tamarine's style is also good and I like that she is Thai. Both players use ground strokes from the baseline, which is like my style.

Who's the toughest opponent you've faced?

Jamie Hampton who beat me in the third round of this year's Australian Open 6:1, 6:2. She has a big serve, she's tall and powerful. That defeat taught me that I have to be a stronger player and my serve is too slow. If I want to compete against the powerful women I need to improve my serve.

What are the good points and bad points about being a pro tennis player?

I enjoy meeting new people and learning English. I have not studied much but I have learnt English from other players on the tour. When I was 14 I couldn't speak English. The bad point about the tour is I miss my family.

What's been your best experience on the tour?

Before I turned pro there were a lot of better players than me and playing them would help me to see the faults in my game and to improve them. When you turn pro you have to get stronger and the step up is huge.

Players on the pro circuit act professional and I have to learn to do that.

What's been the highlight of your career so far?

I really enjoyed the Australian Open this year. That was the first time I played there professionally and I made it to the second round which was a big achievement for me. I played there as a junior in doubles and made it to the semifinals, but making the second round as a pro was good for me.

If you could only win one grand slam which one would it be?

The US Open as I like playing on hard courts. When I was a junior I also played on grass and clay but I am better on hard courts.

What are your aims for 2013?

I want to break into the top 100 (Luksika is currently ranked 135th in the world.)

How have you found the International Tennis Federation (ITF) women's tournament at TSLC this year?

I feel the pressure a bit this year as I am the number one seed. The other players up their game against me to try and beat me.

- Andrew Scott



Luksika Kumkhum. Photo: TSLC

TSLC hosted the second women's tournament of the 2013 ITF round from April 27 to May 4. The event was proudly sponsored by the *Phuket Gazette*, PGTV and 'Phuket Today', the island's only national television show, broadcast daily on True Visions (channels 99 and 58).

BIS win Plate

THE British International School (BIS) Phuket under-10 boys football team travelled to play in the 4th annual Bangkok International Youth Football Festival at Bangkok Patana International School, on April 5.

The nine-year-olds from Phuket were the only school team and were competing against soccer academies from India, China, Singapore, Vietnam, Hong Kong and Bangkok. After some fantastic performances, BIS Phuket qualified from their group and went into Sunday's quarterfinals.

Despite giving their best effort, the boys from Phuket were eliminated in their quarterfinals match when a talented JSSL Arsenal side defeated them 1-0. This meant that they would now play for the 'Plate'. After comfortably beating



BIS under-10 boys. Photo: BIS

Delhi (India) in the semifinal, BIS Phuket faced Bangkok Soccer Schools in the final. Nine-year-old Joe Hunter drilled two low shots into the bottom corner to give the Phuket boys an early lead, but Bangkok fought back and curled a free kick in to the top corner to make the score 2-1. The BIS Phuket under-10 boys held on to their lead and took the trophy home, much to the delight of their parents and other fans who traveled with the boys to Bangkok. - *Phuket Gazette*

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